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T H E

W O R K S

Of the L E A R N E D

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE, D.D.

Rector of St. LAWRENCE JEWRY,
LONDON.

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V O L U M E III.

A B E R D E E N :

Printed by J. CHALMERS, for ALEXANDER
THOMSON Bookfeller, and sold at his Shop in
the *Broadgate*.

MDCCLI.

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T H E

W O R K S

Of the Learned

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE, D.D.



Regist. of St. ...

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EARL OF SHAFTESBURY'S
P R E F A C E.

AMongst those many things which are made publick ; it may be thought, perhaps, of *sermons* ; that they are, of any other, the least wanted, and, for the future, least likely to be found wanting ; since to that rich and inexhaustible store, with which the learned and orthodox divines of *England* have already furnished us, there is daily fresh addition, from worthy and able hands. Neither have we cause to fear a cessation in this kind ; or that so great a blessing is likely to fail us, for the future ; having such security, not only from the unwearied zeal of present divines (of whom we may always hope a worthy succession) but, from the just esteem which the publick never fails to shew for such pious discourses. Upon which account, we find that many of these are every day made publick ; and, as it were, forced into the world ; notwithstanding the great modesty of their authors whose humble thoughts and devoutly resigned affections, lead them not towards eminence and advancement in the world.

It may seem strange therefore, that in such an age as this, any one should be so officious, as to search after, and publish the sermons of a man long since dead, who (himself) never meant to publish any ; or thought so highly of himself, as that he could benefit the world by such a publication.

It is certain, that we must not ever imagine, nor can it enter into a mind truly christian, that because we see not an apparent change for the better, in the lives of christian professors ; that, therefore all *preaching* is ineffectual ; or, that here in *England*, the labours of the most eminent divines that perhaps the world ever afforded, have been of no use

at all : it might be said with the same reason (though very profanely and wickedly) that because the christians are not reported to exceed the other nations of the world, in probity, and good living ; but are said to be rather inferior in this respect, to the civilized people, whether Pagan or Mahometan, lying round them ; that therefore the christian religion is of no effect at all, nor any ways operative upon the lives of its professors.

But, if we consider this as becomes us ; and not perversely, as many do ; it will be found that we are, even in this sense, the most highly indebted to *christianity* ; and should look upon it as the greatest blessing imaginable ; not only for its spiritual advantages, which are unspeakable ; but for its temporal benefits and securities ; in as much as that mankind being so inclinable to ill, we should have a religion so full of all good precepts, and so enforcing with respect to all the duties of morality and justice. So that our amazement ought rather to be ; how men, with such a religion, should lead such lives ; and how malice, hatred or division, should have place in such societies as these ; which we might expect to see distinguished from all others, rather by a perfect harmony and agreement, than by the fiercest quarrels, contentions and animosities.

And, indeed, when we consider the nature of *preaching* ; how excellent an order and establishment it is ; how highly raised and magnified in the christian world : when we consider numbers of holy men set apart for this great work ; having all advantages given them, the better to set forth those glorious truths of revelation, and to create a reverence of religion in the minds of men ; when we consider the solemnity of a church-assembly, and the awful presence and authority of the christian orator ; we may be apt to wonder perhaps, why we see not greater and more happy effects hereof, in the world.

world. However we must of necessity conclude, that *this institution* being undoubtedly so powerful a support of our religion ; if such assemblies as these were not upheld, if such authority as this did not subsist, the consequence would be, that as in a little time there would be no more christianity left in the world, so neither any morality ; since, notwithstanding all the helps of *preaching*, and the assistance and support which virtue receives from hence, the lives of men are still so far from being reform'd, and the world so little improved in these latter ages.

But, how reverently soever we have cause to think concerning *this institution*, and the undoubted good effects of it upon mankind ; and, whatever high opinion and esteem we may justly have of their performance in whose hands this power is plac'd ; it seems not wholly impossible, but that there may be some defect in this great affair ; and that the causes of ill success may not lie altogether in the depravity, perverseness, or stupidity of mankind, who are the hearers and readers of these doctrines.

In some countries, and amongst some sorts of christians, we have seen, that the whole of *this institution* has not been appropriated to spirituals ; but that a great part of those divine exhortations have had something in common with the policies of the world, and the affairs of government, and, of whatsoever benefit this may have been to mankind, or to the peace of the christian world ; it must be own'd that *preaching* itself, will be so much the less apt to make any happy revolution in manners, as it has at any time been serviceable to revolutions in state, or to the support of any other interest than that of Christ's kingdom.

Nor do we find, since the arts of government and mysteries of religion, have been thus suited together, that *either* has been much advantag'd by the union ; it having never yet appeared, that divinity has been

greatly bettered by policy ; or that policy has been any where mended by divinity.

Amongst those writers who have been forward in making this unprosperous alliance, and building a political christianity ; there has been * *one* of our nation (in the time wherein our author liv'd) who, whether he may have been serviceable any way to the civil government, or christian church ; it may be concluded, at least, that he has done but very ill service in the moral world. And however other parts of philosophy may be obliged to him, *ethicks* will appear to have no great share in the obligation. He has, indeed with great zeal and learning, been opposed by all the eminent and worthy divines of the church of *England* : and had the same industry been applied to the correction of his moral principles, as has been bestowed in refuting some other of his errors, it might perhaps have been of more service to religion in the main.

This is *he*, who reckoning up the passions or affections by which men are held together in society, live in peace, or have any correspondence one with another, forgot to mention kindness, friendship, sociableness, love of company and converse, natural affection, or any thing of this kind ; I say *forgot*, because I can scarcely think so ill of any man, as that he has not by experience found any of these affections in himself, and consequently, that he believes none of them to be in others. But in the place of other affections, or good inclinations, of whatever kind, this author has substituted only one master-passion, *fear*, which has, in effect, devour'd all the rest, and left room only for that infinite passion towards *power after power*, *natural* (as he affirms) *to all men, and never ceasing but in death* ‡.

* *Mr. Hobbs.* ‡ *Leviathan p. 47.*

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So much less *good nature* has he left with mankind, than what he allows the worst of beasts : having allotted to us, in the way of our nature, such mischievous passions as are unknown to them ; and not so much as allowed us any degree of their good ones, such as they all are known to have, and are never wanting to exert towards their own kind : by which excellency of nature (so little reckon'd upon in the case of mankind) their common interest is duly served, and their species propagated and maintain'd.

Had not the poison of these immoral, and (in reality,) *Atheistical* principles been diffused more than 'tis easy to imagine, (at that time especially when Dr. *Whichcote* appeared) we should, perhaps, where morality was concerned, have heard less of *terror* and *punishment* ; and more of *moral rectitude* and *good nature*. At least, it should not have grown customary to explode good nature, and detract from that good which is ascribed to *natural* temper, and is accounted *natural affection*, as having ground and foundation in *meer nature* : on the contrary ; it would have been the business of those who had managed the cause of religion, to have contended for these better dispositions ; and to have shewn, how deep a root and foundation they had in human nature ; and not, just contrary-wise, to have built on the ruin of *these*. For, with some people, this was then become a method to prove christianity. Revelation was, to owe its establishment to the depression and lowering of such principles as these, in the nature of man : and the weakness of these was made the strength of religion. As if good nature, and religion, were enemies : a thing, indeed, so unthought of, amongst the *heathens* ; that *piety* (which was their best word to signify *religion*) had more, than half its sense, in natural and good affection ; and stood not only for the adoration and worship of

God, but for the natural affection of parents to their children, and of children to their parents ; of men to their native country ; and, indeed, of all men in their several relations, one to another.

It must be confess'd, that it has been the reproach of some sects of christians amongst us ; that their religion appear'd to be in a manner, opposite to good nature ; and founded in moroseness, selfishness, and ill-will to mankind ; things, not easily reconcilable with a christian spirit. But, certainly, it may be said of *the church of England*, if of any church in the world, that this is not *her* spirit : but, it is by characters and features just contrary to these, that *this church* shews herself, above all others, most worthily and nobly christian.

It is certain, that there is nothing more contend-
ed for, by those who would not willingly admit a Deity ; nor is there any thing of greater use to them, in their way of reasoning, than to have it pass as current, that there are in man, no natural principles inclining him to society ; nothing that moves him to what is moral, just and honest ; except a prospect of some different good, some advantage of a different sort from what attends the actions themselves. Nor is it strange, that they, who have brought themselves off from so much as believing the reality of any ingenuous action, performed by any of mankind, meerly through good affection, and a rectitude of temper ; should be backward to apprehend any goodness of that sort, in a *higher nature* than that of *man*. But it is strange to conceive, how men who pretend a notion and belief of a *supreme power*, acting with the greatest goodness, and without any inducement but that of love and good-will, should think it unsuitable to a rational creature, derived from *him* to act after *his* example, and to find pleasure and contentment in the works of goodness and bounty, without other prospect.

prospect. But, what is yet more unaccountable, is, that men who profess a religion where *love* is chiefly enjoined ; where the heart is expressly called for, and the outward action without that, is disregarded, where charity (or kindness) is made all in all ; that men of this persuasion should combine to degrade the principle of good nature, and refer all to reward ; which being made the only motive in mens actions, must exclude all worthy and generous disposition, all that love, charity, and affection, which the scripture enjoins ; and without which no action is *lovely* in the sight of God, or man ; or in itself deserving of notice or kind reward.

But, perhaps, one reason of this misfortune has been ; that some men, who have meant sincerely well to religion and virtue, have been afraid, least by advancing the principle of good nature, and laying too great a stress upon it, the apparent need of *sacred revelation* (a thing so highly important to mankind) should be, in some measure, taken away. So that they were forced in a manner, to wound virtue and give way to the imputation of being mercenary, and of * *acting in a slavish spirit, in the ways of religion*, rather than admit a sort of rival (in their sense) to the faith of divine revelation : seeing that christianity (they thought) would, by this means be made less necessary to mankind ; if it should be allowed that men could find any happiness in virtue, but what is in reversion.

Thus, *one party* of men, fearing the consequences which may be drawn from the acknowledgment of moral and social principles in human-kind, to the proof of a Deity's existence, and, *another party* fearing as much from thence, to the prejudice of revelation ; *each* have in their turns *made war* (if I may say so) even on *virtue* itself : having exploded

* Expression of Dr. *Whichcote's*,

the principle of good nature ; all enjoyment or satisfaction in acts of kindness and love ; all notion of happiness in temperate courses and moderate desires, and, in short, all virtue or foundation of virtue ; unless *that*, perhaps, be called *merit* or *virtue* which is left remaining, when all generosity, free inclination, publick spiritedness, and every thing else besides *private regard*, is taken away.

If this may be said to be our case, under this dispute ; and, that true religion itself (which is *love*) be thus endangered ; and morality so ill treated, between two such different and distant parties ; if each of these, notwithstanding their vast disagreement, do yet, in this matter, so fatally agree, to decry human nature, and destroy the belief of any immediate good or happiness in *virtue*, as a thing any way suitable to our make and constitution ; there is, then, so much the more need of some great and known man to oppose this current. And, here it is that our *author* has appeared so signally. *Whatsoever*, (says he) *some have said*, man's nature is not so untoward a thing (unless it be abused) but that there is a secret sympathy in human nature, with virtue and honesty ; which gives a man an interest even in bad men.—God in infinite wisdom, has so contrived ; that, if an intellectual being sink itself into sensuality, or any way defile and pollute itself ; then, miseries and torments should befall it, in this state. — *Virtue*, and *vice* (says he) are the foundations of peace and happiness, or sorrow and misery. — There is inherent punishment belonging to all vice ; and no power can divide or separate them. For, tho' God should not, in a positive way, inflict punishment ; or any instrument of God punish a sinner ; yet he would punish himself ; his misery and unhappiness would arise from himself.— Thus speaks our excellent divine, and truly christian philosopher ; whom, for his appearance thus in defence of natural goodness, we may call
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the preacher of good nature. This is what he insists on, every where ; and, to make this evident, is, in a manner, the scope of all his discourses. And, in conclusion of all this ; 'tis hoped that what has been here suggested, may be sufficient to justify the printing of these sermons.

As for *our author* himself : what his *life* was ; how great an example of that happy temper, and God-like disposition, which he laboured to inspire ; how much he was, for the excellency of his life, and admirable temper, esteemed and beloved of all ; and even in the worst of times, when feuds and animosities, on the account of religion were highest (during the time of the late great troubles,) how his character and behaviour drew to him the respect of all parties, so as to make him be remarkably distinguished ; how much in esteem he was with the greatest men ; and how many constant hearers he had of the best rank and greatest note, even of the most eminent divines themselves : this is sufficiently known. And the testimony which the late *Archbishop Tillotson* has given of him, though it be in a funeral sermon, is known to be in nothing superior to his desert.

The sermons which are here printed, have been selected out of numbers of others less perfect, there being not any of our author's extant, but such as were written after him at church ; he having used no other than very short notes, not very legible ; though these have been of great use to the publisher, in whose hands they have been.

The unpolished stile and phrase of *our author*, who drew more from a college than a court ; and who was more used to school-learning, and the language of an university, than to the conversation of the fashionable world, may possibly but ill recommend his sense to the generality of readers. And since none of these discourses were ever designed for
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the world, in any other manner than as he (once for all) pronounced them from the pulpit ; they must of necessity appear to have a roughness in them, which is not found in other sermons more accurately penned by their authors. For, though the publisher has sometimes supplied him out of himself, by transferring to a defective place, that which he found in some other discourse where the same subject was treated ; yet, so great a regard was had to the very *text*, and *letter* of *his author*, that he would not offer to alter the least word : and wheresoever he has added any thing, to correct the most apparent omission, or fault of the penman, he has taken care to have it marked in different characters ; * that nothing might appear as *our author's* own, which was not perfectly *his*. Tho', some

* In this the present editor has not imitated the noble publisher of Dr. *Whichcote's* select sermons ; either in the verbal corrections made in the author's other sermons ; or in copying those which are only to be found among the select ones. Such marks and difference of characters would have greatly spoiled the beauty of the impression : and however proper it might have been at the first publication, it did not appear so necessary now ; as of some of the discourses there are two, and of all one edition already extant, with which any, who think it worth their while, may easily compare the present. He thinks it proper here to inform the reader, that as some of the select sermons are found re-published in the edition by Dr. *Jefferies* and Dr. *Clark*, care has been taken to compare them together. In doing this it soon appeared that neither of them could be complete alone ; for in each there are many sentences and paragraphs entirely wanting, which may be supplied from the other, and which indeed the connection and structure of the whole shows ought to be supplied. This has been done with care and fidelity ; with what success must be

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others in the world have been very far from this caution : since, of late, some things have been set in *our author's* name, which his best friends disown to be his ; and which any one who studies him in his genuine works, will easily know to be unworthy of him.

And, now, when these disadvantages which have been mentioned, are considered ; since they are no more than what sensible people will easily make allowance for : 'tis presumed there may be in the world some persons who will, notwithstanding, think, these sermons to be of worth, and may perhaps discover in them some peculiar beauties, such as are not to be despised for want of that ornament which might have accompanied them. I know that there are now growing up, in the world too many who are prejudiced against all pulpit-discourses ; and who, in this prophane age, are led to think not only *the institution of preaching*, but even the *gospel* itself, and *our holy religion* to be a fraud. But, notwithstanding all the prejudice of this kind, 'tis to be hoped that even some of these persons (if they have any candour left) may be induced to applaud some things that they may meet with here ; so as from hence, perhaps, to like christianity the better. *This* we may with assurance say, that were there besides ours, any religion, ancient or modern, that had so divine a man as this to shew ; these very men would admire and reverence him ; and though a priest of that religion, and bound to comply with

submitted to the publick ; only it may be noticed as a proof of the necessity of doing it, that the sermons as they appear in this edition, are evidently more regular, methodical and connected, than in either of the former impressions single. So that it may be asserted, that this is the only complete edition that has yet been seen of Dr. *Whichcote's* works.

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established superstition, would praise his virtue ; and perhaps, be forwardest to extol his sentences and works, in opposition to our sacred religion. But this is hard, that even *beathen religion*, and *Paganism* can be more mildly treated, and cause *less aversion* than *christianity*. To such men as these, I can say nothing further. But if they who are thus set against christianity, cannot be won over, by any thing that they may find here ; yet we may assure ourselves, at least, of *this* good effect from hence, that the excellent spirit which is shewn here, and that vein of goodness and humanity, which appears throughout these discourses, will make such as are already christians, to prize and value christianity the more : and, the fairness, ingenuity and impartiality, which they may learn from hence, will be a security to them against the contrary temper of those other irreconcilable enemies to our holy faith.

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JOHN vii. 46.

Never man spake like this man.

BEcause there are amongst us, those who are bold to call into question Deity, those who dispute against the main and principal matters of christian faith, under pretence of *reason* (the excellency of God's creation : by which I will be concluded,) therefore, I make choice of these words to deal with them with their own instrument : and if for our religion, if for our christianity, we cannot produce greater reason, than they have against them, let them both fall to the ground.

Never any man spake as our Lord and Saviour.

You may consider these words as they refer, either.

I. To the *speakers* : or

II. To the *matter* they do contain.

I. If to the *speakers*, then the speakers of these words may be considered either as *friends*, as *enemies*, or as *strangers*. For since they are not particularly named, they must fall under one of these three.

1. If you will have them *friends*, then friends you know speak in love and good-will, and out of knowledge

ledge and experience ; and good-will and experience are probable reporters. For good-will makes candid interpretation and best construction ; and all mens words and phrases are to be taken in good meaning, if they are not apparently otherwise ; it is represented as the greatest cruelty, *to make a man an offender for a word*, Isa. xxix. 21. Then for experience, this is one of the three great principles of knowledge. The three great principles of knowledge are reason, scripture and general and universal experience ; now our rule is in point of experience, to believe every man in his faculty and profession. Dry reason is oftentimes doubted of ; but when in conjunction with experience, we then think we have double assurance.

2. But then *secondly*, if you look upon them as *enemies*. If an enemy speak well of any body, you will easily imagine the greater reason to believe it : whence it is said, if I have not a friend, pray God send me an enemy, that I may be sure to hear of my faults. Friends often palliate and flatter, where enemies abate nothing of what is true, it is an observation of wise *Solomon's* ; that every one flatters himself more or less in his own cause, but he that is on the other side coming to reply doth search him out, *Prov. xviii. 17*. It all proves, that upon hearing the first party declare and shew, the hearer thinks himself sure of the right of the case, but when the other comes to declare, the former shews and appearances vanish : whence the rule is, who-soever doth determine any thing before he hears a full declaration on both sides, he is not a man of justice ;

justice; he himself is an unjust arbitrator, tho' he happen to do right.

3. But *thirdly*, I take these reporters in the text to be neither friends nor enemies, but *strangers*; and that they found beyond what they thought or imagined, and so are overpowered and convinced; for they were officers under authority, who are not wont to distinguish of causes, but know only to execute and obey. Now these men, they meet with what they looked not for; and fall down under the evidence and worth of truth, *Acts viii. 13. Numb. xxiv. 23.* And so break out into this expression and acknowledgment, neither considering their own interest, in the displeasing those that sent them, nor compliance with their superiors will, *v. 48. 49.* Then here is the notion: among other excellencies of divine truth this is none of the smallest weight, that when it is declared it doth recommend itself to, and satisfies the mind of man concerning it's reality and usefulness. Men are wanting to themselves, that they do not see with their own eyes; that they do not make a particular search; that they do not examine; that they do not consider; or, in a word, that they do not use the judgment of discerning. For we that are of the reformed religion, who deny the infallible visible judge, we do allow to every christian a private judgment of discerning; not only as his privilege that God hath granted him, but as his charge. Where people are of no education, have no liberty or advantage in respect of leisure, or other opportunities; we do advise them to use modesty and humility, and to be rather learners,

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than forward to teach. For it is good counsel, and it is that which is done in all other affairs : who soever he be that hath not the opportunity to acquaint himself with the mystery ; it is safer for him to make use of other expedients than for him to be peremptory in a resolution. But this for certain, men are wanting to themselves if they do not see with their own eyes, if they do not search and use a judgment of discerning. For men attain to no settled state in religion, no height or excellency of spirit, who do not make a discernment by their judgments. But they run away with presumptions, suppositions ; with conceited imaginations, with received dictates, are light of faith, credulous, do comply with others in sense, in judgment, in practice : and it is their necessity so to do ; if they will not make matters of knowledge their business, there cannot be receiving of truth in the love of it, and consequently in the certain obedience of it, where there is not receiving of truth, in the particular judgment of the certain verity of it, and the sense of the goodness of it. This advantage truth hath. The naked discovery of truth is enough on truth's part, if there be not an indisposition in the receiver : truth hath so much of self evidence, so much of clearness, it is so satisfactory to the reason of an ingenuous mind, that it will prevail and overpower men, unless there be an indisposition in the receiver that gives an incapacity. The like with this you have in *Matth. xxvii. 54.* when they heard and saw what fell out ; they said, *verily it is the son of God.* I look at these words as the effect of that majesty, sovereignty, and authority

authority, that divine truth hath over the minds and consciences of men. This I take for the certainest matter of experience : all things are according to the disposition of the receiver ; one man will interpret into a courtesy that which another turns into an injury. According as men are in preparation and disposition of mind, so will things be entertained that are offered to consideration, and proposed. But truth if it doth appear, if it be represented and fairly proposed ; it will find entertainment in a man's mind ; if a man's mind be not by contrary indisposition made in an incapacity. Truth is the soul's health and strength, natural and true perfection. Truth if it be fairly proposed, it will find entertainment in a man's mind, if a man's mind be not by indisposition made incapable : and that for two reasons. 1. Because of it's descent from God. The soul and truth have both one father ; therefore he is called *the father of spirits*, Heb. xii. 9. and *the God of truth*, Psal. xxxi. 5. *He teaches the mind of man knowledge. The inspiration of the almighty gives understanding.* 2. Because of the relation that truth hath to a man's soul. Truth is a-kin to man's mind, so that you may say, as *Adam* did of *Eve*, *thou art bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh*, Gen. ii. 23. So saith the mind of man of truth. Thou art near of kin to me ; or as increated wisdom speaks to God, so truth speaks the same language to man's soul, *I was with thee as one brought up with thee, I was daily thy delight*, Prov. viii. 30. Truth is so near to the soul ; so much the very image and form of it ; that it may be said of truth ; that as the soul is by de-

rivation from God so truth by *communication*. No sooner doth the truth of God come into the soul's sight, but the soul knows her to be her first and old acquaintance : which tho' they have been by some accident unhappily parted a great while ; yet having now thro' the divine providence happily met, they greet one another and renew their acquaintance as those that were first and ancient friends. If truth doth but appear, the soul resigns up it self to it ; nothing is more natural to man's soul than to receive truth from any person.

This you may observe, considering the words as they refer to the speakers. Take either of these accounts, take them in what consideration you will, we may conclude thus from what these men say that the doctrine of Christ comes with great evidence and assurance of truth. For these they were most probably persons either prejudiced already ; or mere strangers, yet these men, who expected not, are overpowered and convinced, and forced to make this acknowledgment ; *never man spake like this man*.

II. But I will not lay the stress of my argument upon the credit of those who spake these words, for they were I know not whom ; and I will make no more advantage than I will give to the devil himself, who is related to speak many things that are reported in scripture : but I will found my argument on the quality of the matter.— Yet it is considerable that they who are either engaged in the contrary party, are declared enemies, and have a contrary interest, or strangers ; that even *they* are overborn, and so far subdued, as to make an acknowledgment.

There

There are among us, persons that are sensual and outright brutish ; that put off human nature, and discharge themselves of principles of reason and understanding. I think no man doubts of this. It seems to be evident and undeniable, yea they themselves are self-condemned in what they do : and men that do distemper themselves and put themselves out of the use of their reason ; when they do recover ; they wish they could do otherwise.

But then, there are those that pretend to dispute against Deity, and under excuse of reason pretend to be atheists. These make a great bluster and noise in the world, and undertake to defend themselves with shew and colour of reason and argument.

And again : there are those who will admit of principles of reason to the full, and all the immediate necessary results and unavoidable deductions from it ; and yet they stick at revealed truth ; pretending want of evidence and a failure in point of assurance, and of infallible conviction and confirmation, these men avoid atheism ; but stick in infidelity.—Now with him that pretends to atheism, or who if he doth acknowledge Deity, is an infidel and sticks at revealed truth ; these *two* last I will deal with, from this scripture ; for as for the first sort, they being self-condemned are easily convinc'd.

Now the doctrine of Christ comprehends two sorts of things.

1. It doth reinforce and further acknowledge the indubitable principles of God's creation. Thus it comprehendeth all *moral* notices ; all piety to God,

good government in man's own person, and all equitable dealing with men.

2. Or else it doth consist of pardon of sin and recovery ; and upon what terms we are reconcileable to God. Truth is of a different emanation, for I cannot distinguish truth in itself ; but in way of descent to us ; *truth* either of *first inscription*, or of *after-revelation from God*.

Concerning the *former* ; nothing is more knowable than the great instances of natural truth, *viz. to do justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with God ;* Mic. vi. 8. *to live godly, righteously and soberly in this present world*, Tit. ii. 12. The truth of first inscription is connatural to man, it is the light of God's creation, and it flows from the principles of which man doth consist, in his very first make. This is the soul's complexion.

Concerning the *latter* : nothing more credible and worthy of belief than the great matters of faith ; *viz. pardon of sin in and thro' Christ*, upon our repentance and faith in him. The truth of after-revelation is the soul's cure, the remedy for the mind's ease and relief. The great expectation of souls, is the promise of God's *Messiah*. They wait for the *consolation of Israel*. For this hath been the state of the world : man in degeneracy and apostacy disabled himself, prejudiced his interest in God : losing his interest by his degeneracy and apostacy, he is in hope and expectation of some revelation from God, concerning terms of reconciliation and recovery ; and when these did appear, then was it said ; *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.*

Here

Here comes truth of *after-revelation* for the recovery of man, when he was apostatiz'd from the truth of *first inscription*.

The former of these, is of things necessary in themselves, in their nature and quality ; so, immutable and indispenfable. The latter is the voluntary results and determinations of the divine will. Things that are of an immutable and indispenfable nature, we have knowledge of them by the light of first impressiion. The voluntary results of the divine will we have by revelation from God. Man's observance of God in all instances of morality ; these are truths of *first inscription*. Now these are abundantly knowable if we consider ourselves ; these have a deeper foundation, greater ground for them, than that God gave the law on mount *Sinai* ; or that he did after engrave it on tables of stone ; or that we find the ten commandments in the bible. For God made man to them, and did write them upon the heart of man before he did declare them upon mount *Sinai*, before he engraved them upon the tables of stone, or before they were writ in our bibles ; God made man to them, and wrought his law upon mens hearts ; and as it were, interwove it into the principles of our reason ; and the things thereof are the very sense of man's soul, and the image of his mind : so that a man doth undo his own being, departs from himself, and unmakes himself, confounds his own principles, when he is disobedient and unconformable to them ; and must necessarily be self-condemned.——The law externally given was to revive, awaken man, after his

apostacy and sin, and to call him to remembrance, advertency and consideration. And, indeed, had there not been a law written in the heart of man ; a law without him could be to no purpose. For had we not principles that are *concreated* ; did we not know something, no man could prove any thing. For he that knows nothing, grants nothing. Whosoever finds not within himself principles suitable to the moral law, whence with choice he doth comply with it ; he hath departed from himself, and lost the natural perfection of his being : and to be conformable to this is the restitution to his state.

Things of natural knowledge, or of first inscription in the heart of man by God, these are known to be true as soon as ever they are proposed : it is that we are under a deep obligation to ; to live in observance of God, to obey him, and fulfil his will, to place affiance, trust and confidence in him ; and (which is the sum of natural religion,) to imitate him whom we do worship ; and endeavour, in our measures and degree, to be *that* we ascribe to God, fulness and perfection. And then toward our fellow creatures, to deal righteously. And in the government of ourselves, to live soberly. And he hath abused himself, and forc'd himself from his nature, and deformed the creation of God in him, whosoever doth not take acquaintance with, subscribe to make acknowledgement of these great things. *The great principles of reverence of Deity : of sobriety in the government of a man's own person : moderate use of the pleasures and contentments of this life. The great instances of righteousness and justice in mens transactions,*
one

one with another ; for they are connatural to man.

Then for truth of gospel-revelation, that speaks for itself, recommends itself, and shews itself to be of God : it is matter of easy belief ; viz. that God will pardon sin to those that repent and believe ; 1. Upon the supposition that man was never better than finite and fallible. 2. That God is original to the creature. And 3. That God is merciful and compassionate. These three make it very credible that God will by some means or other pardon sin. That God at first made the creature finite and fallible. Man is God's creature and God stands in a fatherly relation to him ; therefore he will entertain returning prodigals. God is the first and chiefest good, and therefore it is natural to shew as much mercy and compassion, as the case will admit of. In this case we may say as the *Samaritans* to the woman : they were brought to take cognisance of our Saviour, by the credible report of the woman : but after they had converse with him ; *now* say they, *we believe in him, not for thy words* (but we credited thee so far forth as to come and see him :) *but because we have seen, and heard*, John iv. 42. Such are the declarations of faith in God by Jesus Christ, of remission of sins, of God's accepting of sinners upon repentance, that any man that is awake to any true apprehensions of God, he will readily believe them and embrace them, when they are declared to him by any instrument. The great things of revealed truth tho' they be not of reason's invention, yet they are of the prepared mind readily entertain'd and receiv'd : as for instance : remission of sins to them that re-
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pent and deprecate God's displeasure ; it is the most credible thing in the world. For God made us creatures fallible at the best. Now here is *finite and fallible* ; *failing and miscarrying* ; — *repenting and reforming upon a declaration from God*. So false is it that the matter of our faith is unaccountable ; or that there is any thing unreasonable in religion ; that there is no such matter of credit in the world as the matters of faith ; nothing more intelligible. It was a mystery *before* ; God in Christ reconciling the world : *now* all the world is taken into a possibility of receiving benefits hereby. Tho' there be nothing of merit on the creature's side ; nothing that we can do that can deserve ; yet it is a matter of very fair belief, that the original of all beings, the father of all our spirits, the fountain of all good, will one way or other pardon sin, and do what behoves him, for the recovery of his lapsed creation : and any probable narration made in the name of God, of the way and means and the particular circumstances whereby God will do it, will fairly induce belief with sober serious and considerate minds, and what have we to do with others, upon the account of religion ? If they be not serious and considerate, they are not in a disposition towards religion. That promise of *the seed of the woman breaking the serpent's head* : God hath been speaking this out further and further, by his various revelations in the several successions of time : he has represented it in divers shapes. But now we have it expounded. For *the seed of the woman* is God manifested in the flesh : and *breaking the serpent's head* is destroying

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ing the work of the devil. The anti-type doth exactly answer the variety of the types, all foretold of our Saviour was fulfilled in him.——We have many things in prophane stories in several ages that give testimony and light to parts of reveal'd truth. Many of their stories are in imitation of scripture history : as *Nisus's* hair in imitation of *Sampson's* : *Deucalion's* flood in imitation of *Noah's* : *Hercules* in imitation of *Joshua*, &c.——Many of the heathens that were not corrupted by education or interest, or the strain of the time, do relate many things that are consistent with those that are in the bible. *St. Austin* tells us, he found the beginning of the first chapter of *St. John's* gospel among the *Platonists*. *Eusebius* read in the commentaries of the heathens those circumstances and matters of fact that the evangelists do mention, and also the signs at our Saviour's crucifying, as the eclipse of the sun, and an earthquake, and other accidents. *Textullian* speaks of fundry things which *Pilate* writ to *Tiberius* suitable to what the evangelists relate concerning our Saviour. Yea *Mahomet* himself, who is the last great impostor, doth mention the soldiers apprehending our Saviour with an intention to put him to death : acknowledging him to be a great prophet, but he tells us when those soldiers were stricken down, God took him away, and they lighted upon another something like him and crucified him. *Plutarch*, an eminent author gives us an account of *Pan*, the great Dæmon of the heathens, who was heard greatly to complain, that a *Hebrew* child was born, and they never heard him after ; all the oracles then ceasing.

ceasing. *Porphry*, tho' of no great credit, says, that after one whom they call'd *Jesus* came to be worshipped, they never could receive any more benefits by any of their Gods. One of the *Roman* emperors was so possessed with what was related concerning a kingly race among the *Jews*, and was so startled with the credibleness of the report, that he set himself to destroy all of the family. *Publius Lentulus* gives the senate an account that he saw, himself, and was an eye-witness of, the man *Jesus* among the *Jews*, who cured all diseases and raised from the dead: insomuch that *Tertullian* bids the heathen emperour search their records, for your own calendar (says he) recites the things that are done by our Saviour. This in the days of *Julian*, who was turned off by the feuds and exasperations, by the factions and divisions among those that were called christians; insomuch that he hated christianity; but otherwise a man of eminent justice, and good to the common-wealth. One who was a philosopher gives an account of the christian religion: "The christian religion (says he) consisting in spiritual worship and devotion to God, purity of mind, holy and unblameable conversation; of all things that are called religion, it is the most entire, the most pure; but only mightily hurt by some who have filled it with superstitious things." *Am. Marcel.*

So that we may resolve, that the difficulty of faith arises from the wicked state of the subject, rather than from the incredibility of the object. It is hard to act otherwise than the state from within doth dispose a man. It is not imaginable, that any man can

can believe contrary to the life he lives in : when he lives in the state of eternal death ; to believe eternal life : or to believe pardon of sin, when he lives in it, and flights the sin he lives in. For our Saviour says, *you cannot believe because of your wicked hearts*. It cannot stand together : to live in sin, and to look for pardon of sin. For God doth not give to any one that is impenitent, the power of faith. *Be not conformed to this wicked world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable will of God*, Rom. xii. 2. Intimating, that if a man lead a wicked and ungodly life ; if a man in respect of state, complexion and constitution of soul, be in contradiction to the principles of religion, the principles of God's creation ; he cannot *prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*. They that were in a religious disposition did readily believe and entertain our Saviour, and acknowledge him to be the *Messiah* that was promis'd of old. But those that were perfectly obstinate in the *Pharisaick* disposition, they rejected him. And this is clearly true, that men cannot believe while they live in sin and are in impenitency, and are under the commands of their lusts. For we find that an ingenuous mind, and one that is a true penitent, he doth with more difficulty forgive himself than God doth. He that is truly affected, and cordially turns to God, he is truly sensible of the deformity and impurity of sin : though repentance gives heart's ease and satisfaction, and tends to the quiet of his mind ; yet he doth more hardly excuse himself than God doth. But a man that

that is wedded to the world, that is under the power of his lusts, that applauds and magnifies himself in self-will, is given up to affectation, arrogance, and self-assuming, how can that man give himself satisfaction concerning pardon of sin, when he is in a contrary spirit, in a contrary disposition. He cannot believe that God will pardon sin ; because he himself doth not pardon any other offender. God's goodness well consider'd speaks him to be propitious and inclinable to compassion : but impenitency speaks a man's incapacity of being pardoned.

This is the sum. All divine truth is of one of these two emanations : either it flows from God, in the first instant and moment of God's creation, and then it is the light of that candle which God set up in man to light him ; and that which by this light he may discover, are all the instances of morality ; of good affection, and submission towards God ; the instances of justice and righteousness to men, and temperance to himself : *or else* it is of an after revelation and discovery. Man being out of the way of his creation, by his defection from God, is recovered by this revelation. Upon this consideration, that a man was never better than finite and fallible, and considering that we have given an offence, and considering the relation that God stands in to his creatures ; and that he is the first and chiefest goodness ; it is what may be fairly supposed, that God will recover his creation, one way or other, wherefore, *that* which the new testament doth discover, is that which was in general expectation.

Now

Now the terms of the new covenant, are possible to sinners:—they are just and fit, reasonable and equal:—they are to us (who are departed from truth) restorative:—they are satisfactory to our mind, and quieting to our conscience—for if I have offended against the rule of right, I ought to repent of it, confess it, be sorry for it, and do my endeavour to commit it no more. And there is reason to think that God can pardon. For every one's right is in his own power. Every one doth dispose of his right in that way which he will. Since therefore it is God's right upon the failure of obedience; to reduce the creature by punishment; it is in his power to abate of punishment, if he pleases, or to remit it. And it is most reasonable to think, that God should be allowed to do this, in what way he would.

Therefore we conclude, that all the instances of christian doctrine (which consists of two sorts of things *viz.* of the reinforced principles of God's creation, which are matters of self-evidence and indispensable; and of the way of recovery and reconciliation to God :) either they are fairly knowable if we use our faculties and understanding (and these are the great instances of morality and principles of reason;) or else, if we do consider those things that are considerable in the case, the things of revealed truth (as pardon of sin in and through Christ, to those that repent and believe the gospel, which is the great matter of faith) are of fair and easy belief. The former of these, the great principles of reason; they are by awakened minds easily and readily found

found out. The latter the matters of faith, are by prepared minds fairly admitted and entertained, this I say against the atheism of the prophane world, and those that do affect to be infidels, because they pretend they have not the assurance of former times, nor of powerful miracles.

I will now instance in those assurances that we have, to settle us in the entertainment of divine truth. And they are these five :

I. They are concurrent with the sense of the heathens and strangers; who do agree with us in all the instances of morality; in these we cannot speak beyond them, they speak and act so as to shame us : for how many of us do act below them in these particulars ? And as to many things of the new testament concerning Christ, we have great testimony from them, as was shew'd.

II. The representation that is made to us by truth concerning God. He is represented worthy himself, and so as we may credit what is said of him.

III. The ingenuous operation that divine truth hath upon men's minds.

IV. It's fitness to man's state : and

V. The agency of the divine spirit in pursuance of it.

I. As to morals, we have the full concurrence with us, of heathen authors, all those that are any whit reform'd. And for the rest, we have a good rule in philosophy, which tells us, that he is incompetent to give testimony upon account of morality, that is himself vicious. For he that is vicious, is himself a moral monster, and upon a moral consideration,

consideration, every man is vicious, that either is stupidly ignorant, or dissolute and prophane; and his sense and judgment in point of truth is inconsiderable and no more to be valued, than in a tryal at law, the testimony of him that is one of the parties. In morals, all those of the heathens, all of all nations that have attained to any reformation, either the improvement of their intellectuals, or the refinement of their morals, they all concur with these immutable and indispensable virtues. So that these have had universal submission to, if not acknowledgment. And as to those revealed; the several parts of history concur in all the things that the evangelists do declare concerning Christ. It is very true, there have been in the world several persons that have grossly neglected the materials of natural knowledge; so that men have suffered their faculties to ly asleep. The mind and understanding have been in most men useless and unemployed, and there hath been invincible *ignorance* as to the great points of reveal'd truth in several ages and places of the world: but this I dare assure you, that there never was any considerable *opposition* against the main principles of natural or reveal'd truth, by those that have any knowledge of it. No man of any competency of knowledge or proportion of goodness, hath risen up against any of these great instances of morality, or the main articles of christian faith, but these have had (as I may say) *universal acknowledgment*. For if any have risen up against them; they have been incompetent; and so of no moral consideration: the universal acknowledgment of a thing for

for truth doth not ly in every individual person's receiving it (for then you have nothing that is of universal acknowledgment) but in the due and even proportion it bears to the universal reason of mankind. This principle no man in his wits will deny. That *it is impossible that the same thing should be, and not be, at the same time*; yet some were so perverse and cross, absurd, and degenerate from sober reason, that they did deny it: and *Plutarch* saith, *that nothing yet was ever in the world so absurd, but some have held it*, therefore we may entertain that which any sober man in the due use of reason hath entertained, and proposed upon terms of reason for the satisfaction of others. And we may conclude, that the universal acknowledgment of a thing as truth, it doth not depend upon every individual person's receiving it; but upon the even and true proportion that things bear to the universal reason of mankind. This is all that can be said when men pretend to prove any thing by universal reason, thus the being of a God is proved by universal reason: for except only monsters (those that are upon the account of morality, very monsters, persons that have grossly neglected their understandings and lived like beasts) none else but have acknowledged *Deity*. Men improved in their intellectuals, and refin'd in their morals, have received and entertained it on grounds of reason.—It is observable, that the great differences that have been between men in the several ages of the world, they have not been about any necessary and indispenfible truth, nor any thing that is declared plainly in any text of scripture, but all the differences

differences have been either in points of very curious and nice speculation, or in arbitrary modes of worship. Now notwithstanding these differences I dare say and give assurance, that God gives men leave, with a safe conscience, to live in peace, and to keep the communion of the church of God in the world, and to submit to the government. Who-soever hath professed himself a christian doth acknowledge Christ to be the head. The christian world scattered into particular ways, and multiplied into sects and parties, yet do agree in the great and bright truths of reason and christianity, such as are fixed, and of the greatest magnitude. Yea go to the *Mahometan* world; the *Mahometans* themselves did never charge *Moses*, or *Christ*, as being impostors. For they acknowledge *Moses*, as we do, for a true prophet, and go along with us in the history of Christ to *John* xiv. 16. and there is their first departure from us. They acknowledge all that is related concerning Christ; only they tell us that what Christ said of sending the spirit and another comforter, is meant of *Mahomet*; and they tell us that our Saviour set down his name, but afterwards his disciples put it out. They acknowledge *Christ* to be a true prophet and beyond *Moses*; and out of respect to him, they deny all that is said about his death and crucifixion. They deny that he was crucified, but that God took him out of their hands when they fell to the ground, *John* xviii. 6. So taking some other like him, they carried him to the high priest, and he was crucified by *Pilate*. This is, as they think, in honour, and kindness, and respect to him.

And this is my first argument. For the truths of the *first inscription*, there we have a full concurrence of all persons valuable that have ever been in the world; and that amounts to an universal acknowledgment. And then for *revealed truth*, many things that we have in the story of *Christ* are avowed by other historians: and I shewed you how far the *Mahometans* go along with us. And then for the truth itself, how credible it is, will appear, if you consider, that man was made finite and fallible; and that God stands in relation of a father to him; and that he is the first and chiefest goodness: which represents this notion to us, that God upon fitting terms would pardon sinners, *viz.* upon their repentance; and would do what is worthy of him for the recovery of lost sinners. And this is a great advancement against atheists and against infidels who are prodigies, and go in a contradiction to all mankind.

But further, reason doth *suppose* two things by which we may be further confirm'd in the truth of our religion.

(1st.) That if it had been a cheat and an imposture, it would have been apprehended in length of time; being often told and in several ages and companies, sometimes by parts, sometimes together, and under several circumstances, and upon several occasions; there would have been some differences in the relations. I do reasonably suppose, that had there been any thing false in our religion, or that were not solid, true and substantial, it having past through sixteen ages, being above sixteen hundred years old, those men that lived before us being inferiour to none
of

of us for parts ; they would by their search and enquiry into it, have apprehended it as guilty and forewarned us of it. Therefore we may take it for granted that the great matters of natural knowledge and faith that have passed thro' so many ages and generations are solid true and substantial, and that the book called the *bible* which hath run down from the time of our Saviour and his apostles to this day, may be received with double assurance, credit and advantage. What is ancient may be received with double credit, for it hath had the proof of all ages before. That which comes down to us thro' several ages before us, is likely to be sincere and true ; because all wits have been employed to search into it. (*Ld. Verulam.*) Truth is brightened as iron, by motion. Error and falshood is never long-liv'd, but truth is eternal, and that which will continue for ever.

(2dly,) I do suppose another thing with great reason ; and that is considering the goodness of God, the care he has of his creatures, his love to truth, and the respect he bears to those that worship him, that he would not suffer the good intentions of such to be abused by any imposture ; but that if any cheat did start up, he wou'd in some time, discover it, nor suffer that which is false to take such place in all times and ages of the world without the least check or controul. — But some may object, if this be so, what say you to the abundance of cheats and impostures in the world ? What say you to the *Mahometans* ; and the great *factions* that have been in the world and prevailed ? Are not these, testimonies against the truth of our religion ? —

A short reply to this. As for *Mahomet* ; he had only the assistance of an apostate monk, who taught him to compound a religion out of gentilism and judaism, and in the composition that he hath made, so far as he hath added any thing of his own, it is so contemptible to sober reason, and so contrary to those things that he hath taken out of the old testament, that it is not hard to detect him for a cheat and an impostor. For divest him but of those things which he stole out of the bible ; and that which is his own, will appear base, vile, and contemptible to the reason of mankind, and most ridiculous. Now if God had given testimony to his religion, it would have been in a way of reason, and most agreeable to the understandings of men ; and not in a way of debauchery and stupid ignorance ; but in some way of worth, perfection, and excellency, purity, and holiness, in such a way as might challenge the greatest opposers to find any thing contrary to those principles of reason and understanding which he hath planted in man's mind. But the things in the objection, are things of baseness and deformity ; and rather certify us that God had withdrawn from those persons, and left them upon their high provocation. As to *Mahomet* ; history doth declare him to be a person of a debauched life ; and one that had not credit in the time of his life. As to the great *factious* that have been in the several ages ; tho' they have been many *persons* ; yet they have been but one *party* ; and one party is to be considered, but as one opinion : for if there be a *thousand* men in a party, it is but *one* opinion ; and one single person

person is as much as a whole party. All those of a party are bound up to one opinion, and to believe as their party believes. Therefore I except against those that have blindly gone on without consideration. For these have not acted by the guidance of human reason.

II. I now pass to *intrinsic arguments*: for this is an argument very foreign: but yet proper for those that pretend to wit and parts. Now I shall give you some *intrinsic arguments*, by which I shall convince those of their wickedness and folly, that affect either atheism, or infidelity. The first is this (which is the second assurance we have of divine truth.) The representation that religion makes to the mind of man concerning God, even such a representation as the mind of man if duly used, and well informed, would conceive concerning him. And this is a great argument. Concerning God; both natural and revealed truth represent him lovely, amiable and beautiful, in the eyes of men. Whatsoever is said of God either acknowledged in scripture, or declared; whatsoever you have contained in these books concerning God, is worthy of him, and is consistent with what man is made to think, or know concerning him. This is as demonstrable as any thing that was ever held forth in the world. For this is truly divine, and godlike, to do good, to compassionate, to relieve, and gratify, and to pardon sin upon fitting terms. *Divinum est condonare, gratificare, benefacere.* And on the contrary it is diabolical and most opposite to the divine nature to destroy, to worry, to grieve, to wrong, to oppress: and

where is the beastly and devilish nature, there is cruelty, and a readiness to destroy. And what a relation doth the bible make of God? *Gracious, merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness*, Neh. ix. 17. So, on the other side; how is the devilish nature described and represented to us? The devilish nature is hurtful, given to malice, hatred, and revenge; but the divine nature is placable, and reconcilable; ready to forgive, full of compassion, and of great goodness and kindness. Scripture doth awaken us to think of many things of God and ourselves, which otherways we should have neglected; which when we have considered, we are sure enough are right and true; being very agreeable to a principle within us, whereby we know them. Concerning God's disposition, the scripture tells us, that *first*, as to himself his nature and disposition, he is placable and ready to forgive. And any man that is in the use of sober reason will acknowledge, that it is a thing of fairest belief; that the original of being, the fountain of all goodness, the first and chiefest good is of a placable disposition: *secondly*, In respect to us; that God will pardon and forgive sins upon fitting terms; tho' no creature can merit it, nor any sinner be fit to procure it, yet infinite goodness is enough to give hope. So that any probable narration made in the name of God, of the way and means, or circumstances whereby it is brought about; fairly induceth belief with sober, serious and considerative minds.

This,

This, for the representation that both old and new testament make of God, and this is agreeable to the sense of every awakened mind. All that the gospel requires, is, repentance from dead works, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the sum of all that is declared and superadded. Now concerning these two, I will offer but three things, and so conclude.

1. Nothing in all the world can be declared or required upon terms of greater justice, reason, and equity. What more just and fit, equal and reasonable in itself, than to revoke what we have done amiss, condemn ourselves in it, ask God forgiveness, and return to duty? For will not any one acknowledge that if an inferior give offence to a superior, he ought to humble himself and ask forgiveness? Can any man's reason in the world be unsatisfied in this? Therefore repentance from dead works speaks for itself.—Then for faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; is it not very equal and fit that if God will pardon sin, he should do it in what way he thinks fitting? that if we go to him for cure, he should take that way to recover us which he thinks best? And if God declare that he hath set up a prince and a Saviour, a head of recovery; is it not fit that all those that expect a remission of sins should acknowledge him for a head? So that these terms which are superadded to the principles of God's creation are such, that there were never more equal, fit, and reasonable, proposed to men: neither is this all.

2. They are not only just and fit in themselves, but satisfactory to the reason of our minds, tending
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to pacify and quiet our consciences. And were they not such as they are, we could not believe them, for this is found to be true upon experience, that the mind of an impenitent cannot receive satisfaction nor consolation in any other way. Should all the men in the world, or an angel from heaven speak pardon to an impenitent; the sense of repentance would be better satisfaction to his mind; beyond any foreign testimony whatsoever. Though God should tell me, my sins were pardoned; I would not believe it unless I repent and deprecate God's displeasure. For repentance is satisfactory to the reason of my mind, is necessary to quiet my conscience; and I should not be rational or intelligent in religion, unless I satisfied my mind; which is to do what I can to revoke what I have done amiss, and to deprecate God's displeasure, and then apply to him for his grace in that way which he had declared. Therefore these terms are not only just and equal in themselves, but tend to the quiet and satisfaction of a man's mind.

3. These terms are restorative to our natures and make us capable of happiness. For he that is a sinner, till he do repent, is upon terms of hostility against God. It is necessary therefore that a man have in himself the sense of repentance for his sin, without which he can never think that his sin can be pardoned, or his person accepted by God. — Now the representation that is made to us by divine truth, either natural, or revealed, is that which is satisfactory and consonant to the reason of our mind: it is that which doth justly represent God as he stands in opposition to the cruel, devilish, and apostate

apostate nature, as being placable, compassionate, and reconciling ; and so in the use of true reason a man would have thought and imagined concerning him ; that he would not be wanting to afford unto men fitting aid and assistance for their recovery. And thus is God represented lovely, beautiful and amiable, in the eyes of the whole creation. And this is my second argument : the representation divine truth makes of God, to the mind of man.

DISCOURSE LI.

The Glorious EVIDENCE and power of DIVINE Truth.

JOHN vii. 46.

Never man spake like this man.

I Take it for granted, that what these men said, is true ; though not true because these men said it. And I have observed from hence, the majesty, sovereignty, and authority of truth, that be the speaker whom it will, yet through the clearness and evidence of truth, it doth surprize men, and take them unawares, overbears them, and ingenuously forceth persons indisposed and unprepared, into an acknowledgment, upon its own appearance to them. And indeed nothing in the world is more powerful and prevailing in the minds of men, than to speak in the evidence and demonstration of reason : our common-wealth consists in the government

ment of reason : reason in our converse and society is beyond all force and violence.

From these words I have made it appear at large that the great notices of *natural knowledge*, and the main articles of *christian faith*, they have had a very great acknowledgement in the world in the several ages of it ; and this is an argument to prevail with the atheist and infidel. I now intend to go upon intrinsick arguments ; and the next is this.

II. The representation that divine truth both natural and revealed, makes of God to the mind of man. (1.) Concerning God as to himself ; both agree in this, to represent God placable, compassionate, reconcilable. And so in true reason a man would imagine.

(2.) In respect to us as sinners, though in a deplorable and forlorn condition, that God will not be wanting to afford fitting aid and assistance for a sinner's recovery. And these I look upon to be principal matters of christian faith.

God is spoken of consistently with what the mind of man is apt to think. For nothing is more apparent in itself, than that it is proper to the divine nature, to pardon, to gratify, do good, relieve and compassionate : and that the most opposite from God is cruelty ; an aptness to destroy, to grieve and oppress : and the scripture doth offer it to our mind concerning God ; which though we should of ourselves not have thought of, yet when it is offered, it is agreeable to the principles of God's creation in us, whereby we know that it is true. I might have been incogitant all my days of these things, which
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when offered, I know to be true, for there is a con-naturalness between divine truth and the mind and soul of man. I now proceed to the next intrinsick argument, (which is the *third assurance* of divine truth) and that is a mighty argument. It is

III. The ingenuous operation that divine truth, both natural and revealed hath upon the mind and understanding of man, and this is a mighty distinction in religion, natural and revealed ; natural, consequent upon God's creation ; and revealed, that is, superadded by revelation of God in scripture, now from this ingenuous operation that this divine truth, both natural and revealed, hath upon the minds and understandings of men will I prove that this is from God. For these truths call creatures to self-resignation, to commit themselves to God, to depend upon him. And how doth this tend to the heart's ease, and to the quiet and satisfaction of a man's soul ? For we know by experience that even the best and wisest of us, are oft times transcended by our occasions, and at a loss. The affairs of the world do transcend the capacities of our mind and understanding : now religion both natural and revealed, doth teach us, that in respect of God we are both instruments assumed, determined, limited, (and it is no disparagement to an instrument if it fail) ; that we are but creatures, and have our dependence upon him ; second causes, and so not primarily concerned ; so not to go out in our own name. Now this divine truth teacheth us, to acknowledge God, and finally aim at his glory, and to rest in him. And how doth this tend to the satisfaction of our minds ?

minds ? because we know that God is wiser than we, and that he is greater and every way better than we ; so that if any thing succeed ill, which either the honour of God, or the good of his creatures, seem'd to require ; then we being but God's instruments and subservient to him may know that we should not have failed, unless God would ; and if it had not been good for the creation, such or such a thing could not have fallen out. Thus our religion teacheth us submission to God acknowledg-ment of him, dependence upon him : it assigns to man his proper place, respectively to his true center, and so lays a foundation of heart's ease, quiet, content, and satisfaction. The grace of the gospel, whereby we hope to be saved, doth not only give continuance, help, real furtherance and assistance to natural truth, (which lost much by man's apostacy from God, and so needed a hand to help it up ;) but it also doth it's own proper work ; by emptying the mind of man of wilfulness, presumption, and self-conceit, which is incident to his nature ; and so making room for the help of grace and divine assistance and forgiveness. The grace of God to which we owe our salvation it doth not only give assistance, recovery, and furtherance to all the principles of real righteousness and true goodness ; which do very much need a help for their recovery, because of man's fall ; but the grace of God doth it's own work besides, it empties the mind of fond persuasion, foolish self-conceit and presumption, and so makes room, gives a man capacity to receive from God, both the grace of assistance, and also makes him capable

pable of forgiveness. — But to pursue this argument a little farther.

A true gospel spirit doth excell in meekness, gentleness, modesty, humility, patience, forbearance ; and these are eminent endowments, and mightily qualify men to live in the world. — This is that which makes men bear universal love and good-will ; and overcomes evil with good, teacheth men to return courtesies for injuries. — This I dare say, had we a man among us that we could produce, that did live an exact gospel life ; had we a man that was really gospelized ; were the gospel a life, a soul, and a spirit to him, as principles upon moral considerations are, he would be the most lovely, useful person under heaven ; this man for every thing that is excellent, and worthy, and useful, would be miraculous and extraordinary in the eyes of all men in the world. Christianity would be recommended to the world by his spirit and conversation. For the life of the heavenly state, so far as it can be expressed to us, is delivered in the gospel-law and rule ; and is put into an act in a gospel spirit and life. The fruit of the spirit in us is in all goodness righteousness and truth. Were a man sincere, honest and true in the way of his religion, he would not be grievous, intolerable, or unsufferable to any body ; but he would command due honour, and draw unto himself love and esteem. For the true gospel spirit is transcendently and eminently remarkable every way, for those things that are lovely in the eyes of men ; for ingenuity, modesty, humility, gravity, patience, meekness, charity, kindness;

ness, &c. and so far as any one is christian in spirit and power, so far he is refined, and reformed by these graces. And for all this that I have said, I will refer you but to that of the apostle, where he doth set out the *fruits of the spirit* and the *works of the flesh*. He tells you that *the works of the flesh are hatred, malice, emulation, strife, sedition, and such like*, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. All of a kind, birds of a feather; and all of them do speak hell broke loose, and come in upon us in the world: for these are from hell, and tend to hell, and represent to us in this world the hellish state that we dread to meet with hereafter. — But on the other side, the fruits of the divine spirit in men, they are *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness, gentleness, and such like*, *verse* 22. And all of these are such lovely things that they make heaven in a degree, where they are found, whereas the former turn the world into a kind of a hell.

Such is the nature of religion, that it keeps the mind in a good frame and temper, it establishes a healthful complexion and constitution of soul, and makes it to discharge itself duly in all its offices towards God, with itself, and with men, whereas the mind of a wicked and profane man, is a very wilderness where lust and exorbitant passions bear down all before them; and are more fierce and cruel than wolves, bears, and tygers. So the prophet, *the wicked is like the raging sea, always casting forth mire and dirt*, Isa. lvii. 20. And, one had better meet a bear robbed of her whelps, than a fool in his folly, Prov. xvii. 12. and you all know who is Solomon's fool, even

even every wicked man.—— The heavenly state consists in the mind's freedom from these kind of things. It doth clear the mind from all impotent and unsatiable desires, which do abuse and toss a man's soul and make it restless and unquiet : it sets a man free from eager and impetuous loves ; and by these men are torn in pieces ; from vain and disappointing hopes, which sink men into melancholy ; from lawless and exorbitant appetites ; from frothy and empty joys ; from dismal presaging fears, and anxious self-devouring cares ; from inward heart-burnings ; from self-eating envy ; from swelling pride and ambition ; from dull and black melancholy ; from boiling anger, and raging fury ; from a gnawing, aking conscience, from arbitrary presumption ; from rigid sourness, and severity of spirit : for these make the man that is not biassed and principled with religion to seeth like a pot, inwardly to boil with the fire and pitchy fumes of hell ; and as outrageous, as when the great *Leviathan* doth cause the waves of the sea to cast out mire and dirt.

But on the other side ; things that are connatural in the ways of religion, the *illapses* and breakings in of God upon us, these require a mind that is not subject to passion ; but in a serene and quiet posture ; where there is no tumult of imagination. It is observed among the the *Rabbins*, that if a prophet fall into a rage and passion, the spirit of prophecy leaves him. They say that *Moses* did not prophecy after the spirit of passion moved him. But sure it is, there is no genuine and proper effect of religion

religion where the mind of man is not composed, sedate and calm. For the great design of Christ's coming into the world was to revive and propagate the divine life, which was extinct by man's apostacy and sin. I find among the philosophers, that they never had expectation of any noble truth from any man that was under the power of lust, or under the command of fancy or imagination ; or that lived in the common spirit of the world ; they thought that God did not communicate himself to such. But this is certain ; that no man that is not born of God, but immersed in a sensual brutish life, can have any true notion of heaven, or of glory : these things must signify no more to him, than a local happiness, and sensual enjoyment, than the highest and greatest gratification, of the animal principle : all that he can think of heaven is, that it is a place of great enjoyment ; some local glory ; something that is suitable to the sensual mind : that is the highest they have. For we cannot ascend higher in our actings than we are in our beings and understandings, so these men fancy the possibilities of happiness to be in the several compliances of the sensual appetites with their suitable objects of delight. And these men that think our happiness lies in the sensual objects of delight are not capable of understanding either the reason or necessity of mortification, inward renewal and regeneration, in order to admittance into heaven. For they do not look upon heaven as a state and temper of mind ; to which it is requisite to be reconciled to the nature of God, and to be according to his mind and will : but they

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look upon it to be some foreign application. — But religion is the introduction of the divine life into the soul of man : and man cannot possibly be really happy in the separate state but by these things ; by having a divine love ruling in their hearts ; by self-resignation and submission to the divine will, and by being like unto God.

Now this is my argument, a declaration of a principle that is antecedent, by the effect that is consequent. Things are very well known what they are in being, by what they are in working ; what the principle of them is, by the effect that flows from them : now I may say of divine truth, whether natural or revealed, that these do satisfy the mind of man, and keep him from being barbarous, cruel and inhumane. For *natural truth* doth give such evidence and assurance of itself, that if you put it in competition with any thing that any natural man, whether atheist or infidel, doth ever rest upon ; it will appear to have a greater foundation in nature, and on the grounds and principles of common reason, equity, and justice, than any thing which can be set up against it, to counterballance it. And *revealed truth* superadded to natural, doth not only give assurance to it, and helps to recover *that* which we know by the light of God's creation, (which is weakened by man's sin, and apostacy from God) but it doth also do its own proper work, and teach a man to return to his own place, to acknowledge God, depend upon him, and be subservient to him. It teaches him to empty his mind of all presumption, pride, arrogance, and self-assuming. So that a

man is fit to receive the grace of pardon and forgiveness of sin together with all divine influence, concurrence, and assistance : for the proud is too self-conceited to be beholden to God ; and too full to receive ; and God, that *gives grace to the humble, resists the proud.* And this is my third argument.

But since I have laid so mighty a weight, and so great a stress upon this acknowledgment in the text, I must needs here prevent an objection which may be raised ; and it is this. ——— Some may object, and say, you have no divine authority for these words ; for tho' they are in the bible, they are but here *related*. I confess I have no more authority from these words, (being spoken by these persons of whom they are related) than if they were clean the contrary of what they are. For I do find concerning our Lord and Saviour, that some persons of like disposition, say, that he did do his miracles by *Belzebub* the prince of devils : and if we lay stress upon the sayers ; we must as well credit them as these. Therefore I will grant you, that I have no authority for ought I have said, from these words materially considered, or as related and put down here : neither do I lay any weight or stress on the sense of these reporters ; for I will grant that it might be hap-hazard what these men said ; for as much as they did not speak out of any purpose or intention, or out of any settled principle ; and such men have, upon the like occasion, given a clean contrary report. Now I will give you a profitable observation from hence : take care how you quote *scripture* ; for *that* is scripture for which you have
divine

divine authority, not *that* which is barely related in the text. For you have the speeches of the devil, and the advice of the worst of men related in scripture.——Scripture is only considered in the truth of matter of fact, and that these things were done ; but it doth not follow from hence that they are materially good ; no man must pretend to do as *Ehud* did ; because his action is recorded in scripture ; no man must pretend to borrowing without intention of paying, as the *Israelites* did ; for if they had not extraordinary warrant, they were to be condemned in their practice. So for us to curse our enemies, as we read in the *Psalms*, the prophet did, not knowing in what spirit it was done, it is not warrantable for us to do the like from thence : neither must we hate any, because the *Jews* were to hate and to destroy the *seven nations* ; which they interpreted a commission to hate *all mankind but themselves*. Therefore in like case, we cannot certainly prove that any thing in the book of *Job* is certainly divine, that was spoken by *Job's* friends ; because God himself declares, that they had not spoken that which was right concerning him, as his servant *Job* had done. Therefore if you will have divine authority, see what is said ; and think it not enough that it is barely related in that book : neither is it enough to pretend to a single text, nor the practice or persuasion of any man whatsoever, nor to any thing accidentally spoken, that can amount either to matter of faith, or divine instruction : it must be express scripture, it must be scripture in conjunction with scripture : for scripture as a

rule of faith, is not one scripture, but all. And therefore, tho' I have taken advantage from these words, yet all along I have laid such certain and such infallible grounds, tending to give satisfaction in the matters of reason and faith, as the several points are capable of.

And now I proceed to a fourth argument, which is this,

IV. The *proportion* that divine truth (both natural and revealed) hath, and the fitness it bears to man in his condition; take him either as he comes into the world, or as he hath used himself: the suitableness of natural truth to man, in the state of his creation; and the suitableness of revealed truth to man, in his lapsed and fallen condition, in order to his restitution and recovery.

And first, for the suitableness of that which we call *natural religion*. Natural religion was the very temper, complexion, and constitution of man's soul in the moment of his creation; it was his natural temper, and the very disposition of his mind; it was as connatural to his soul, as health to any man's body; so that man forc'd himself, offered violence to himself and his principles, went against his very make and constitution, when he departed from God, and consented to iniquity. It is the same thing in moral agents, to observe and comply with the order and dictates of reason, as it is in inferior creatures, to act according to the sense and *impetus* of their natures. It is the same thing with the world of intelligent and voluntary agents, to do that which right reason doth demand and require, as it is
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in sensitives, to follow the guidance of their senses, or in vegetatives, to be according to their natures. This is concluded universally by all moralists. It is as natural for a man, in respect of the principles of God's creation in him, to live in regard, reverence, and observance of Deity ; to govern himself according to the rule of sobriety and temperance, of prudence and moderation ; to live in love, and to carry himself well in God's family ; this, I say, is as natural for him, as for a beast to be guided by his senses, or for the sun to give light, the fire to give heat, heavy things to fall downwards, light things to be carried upwards. — How far therefore are we degenerated and fallen below the state in which God created us ; since it is so rare a thing for us to comply with the reason of things ! — Nothing is more certainly true, than that all vice is unnatural and contrary to the nature of man. All that we call sin, that which is naught, and contrary to the reason of things, is destructive of human nature ; and a man forceth himself when he doth it ; so that, to comply with these principles of natural light and knowledge, which God did implant in us in the moment of our creation ; and exactly to be obedient to the ducture of reason, is connatural to man, in respect of the state of God's creation : and it may be as well expected from an intelligent agent to observe God, and to live righteously and soberly, as from any sensitive agent to follow its appetite. — Humility, patience, meekness, and such like virtues, they do favour nature ; whereas, passion, pride, and envy do waste and destroy nature.

nature. *Nature's* desires are all moderate and limited ; but *lust* is violent and exorbitant. Nature is content with a very few things ; but if a man give way to inordinate desires, then there is no satisfaction to be obtained. Lust is not a thing that will be satisfied by adding and adding ; but he that would be satisfied, must abate and moderate his desires, and undue affections.—It is certain, that all *natural truth*, all that is founded in reason, and that derives from the principles of God's creation, that all of these do agree with man's constitution in the state of innocence.

And for revealed truth ; *that* fits and supplies man in his lapsed state.—Every man that knows his state feels want in himself of health and strength, and revealed truth is *that* which doth supply this want ; and is *that* which he would have wish'd for from God. Then reading the tenor of revealed truth, he will be ready to say, *sic expectavi, sic inveni*, I found as I have expected. In this he hath terms proposed to him of pardon and reconciliation, upon repentance, and returning to God. Never did patient and physician meet more happily, diseate and physick ; than man in a lapsed condition, and the proposals that are through the grace of God in the gospel, *viz.* baseness on our part (for every sin is a base act) and the spirit of ingenuity in the grace of the gospel. In the *one*, there is man full of misery ; in the other the grace of God for mercy and forgiveness. Man's language in that state is, *O wretched man, who shall deliver me from this body of death !* Rom. vii. 24. The grace of the gospel puts these words into his mouth ; *I thank God, through*

Jesus

Jesus Christ my Lord that he hath delivered me. And he is bid to have no evil heart of unbelief. There is a state of guilt on the one side, a state of justification on the other. A state of sin, and a state of holiness : fear of eternal death, and a promise of eternal life. So that the grace of the gospel is fitted to man in his lapsed state and condition, in order to his restoration and recovery.

This is now my fourth argument. The fitness of *natural truth* to man in the state of God's creation : and the fitness of *revealed truth* to him in his lapsed state and condition. Truth of the first inscription establisheth the soul's health, complexion and constitution. Truth of after-revelation is the soul's cure and remedy, the mind's ease and relief.

V. The fifth and last argument is, the agency of the divine spirit in pursuance of what God hath done in the way of divine truth, and before laid the foundation of. For God sends not his truth into the world alone and unaccompanied, but having done one thing, will also do another to make the former effectual. Now they that have not the divine spirit, want the great interpreter upon the words of God, the great commentator upon divine truth in the world ; and therefore their minds are left unsatisfied and unresolved. And therefore let such men look after it. For this is a great and a certain truth, that God, in his grace and goodness, will give his spirit to guide, and teach, and assure the minds of good men ; tho' none know it but those that feel him. But they who have the spirit of God, know nothing more certain ; for they have satisfaction,
and

and inward peace, and joy in believing ; they perceive such operations of God in themselves, whereof the world cannot receive any account: the divine spirit doth open their understandings, as it did the apostles ; brings things to their remembrance ; makes them consider the inwards of things, and calls them to advertency and consideration. The great work of the divine spirit is to lead men into right apprehensions, and stay a man's thoughts in consideration, till the principles do receive admittance, and become a temper and constitution ; till they infuse and instill themselves, and make a lasting impression. This for my part, I do believe, that the scripture is clear and full of light, as to all matters of conscience, as to all rules of life, as to all necessary matters of faith, so that any well-minded man that takes up the bible and reads, may come to understanding and satisfaction. And hence it is that we have sufficiency from God, to preserve us from cheats of all sorts. So that a well minded man, that hath this instrument of God, need not be mistaken in any necessary matters of faith. For the bible is sufficient and intelligible in the way of religion, and for all the purposes thereof, as any other book, for the learning of any other art or science. And upon this account God hath done that which will justify him ; and at our peril be it, if we be found ignorant, or have been deceived : for we needed not ever have been ignorant, or mistaken in any thing that is vital in religion. And to this purpose there is also the divine spirit still to attend upon this instrument of God : so that they
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who do acknowledge God, and pray unto him for his help and assistance, have the advantage of being taught by the spirit, and by means thereof, are in a sure way of knowledge, with the consequent effects of holiness and goodness.

By these *five* arguments, a man may be resolved against the atheism, infidelity, and profaneness of the world.

Now to shut up all ; from this discourse about which I have been so long,

1. I do infer ; that atheism and infidelity are the most unaccountable things in the world, and inexcusable. The atheist must be *every where* self-condemned ; and the infidel *within the pale of the church*. There is nothing that God hath done more in any way whatsoever, than he hath done for the security of men against atheism ; for I dare say, if any man do but think, and use reason, he may know all natural truth. And what can a man do less ? How is he a man if he doth not either of these ? Doth any man know any thing but by thinking and considering ? Yea perhaps *this* is all that we pretend to ; for we are born to nothing else. All habits and dispositions, all actual knowledge, is our own acquisition (with respect to the grace of God and under his assistance) no man is born to any actual knowledge in the world, or to speak a word, or understand a notion ; but all habits and dispositions are acquired. And therefore an atheist shall be self-condemned as one that never used his reason, nor so much as exercised his own thought. And for the infidel within the pale of the church ; he must needs be

be the most neglective person in the world ; for if a man take up this book of God, he may as easily understand what may save his soul as any man may understand any art by any book whatsoever ; if he will but search and consider, he may find that which will beget faith and belief. And therefore the atheist and the infidel are the most unaccountable and inexcusable persons in the world ; for they have done nothing themselves ; they have not so much as thought or considered ; they have not seen with their own eyes. — If a man living in the world or in the church, be either an atheist or an infidel, he hath been an idle person in the world, and a sluggard : his understanding hath received no culture or care, he hath made no improvement of himself, nor done any thing worthy of a man.

2. I advise in this case two things.

1. I advise to purity of mind. Let men purify their minds. For wickedness doth disable the intellectuals : the naughty, malignant spirited man hath no right judgment nor understanding : but *the meek will be guide in the way*, Psal. xxv. 9. and *if you do these things, then shall you know the doctrine*, John vii. 17. *Not conform to the world, but transformed by renewal of the mind, that you may prove what is good and acceptable*, Rom. xii. 2.

2. I advise you to *take up this instrument* of God, the bible ; take it up and read it, *tolle & lege*, and consider, that you may become a christian. I should wonder if any one should not become a christian, if he do take up this book, and read, weigh, ponder, and consider ; at length you cannot

not but be satisfied and resolved, that what is there proposed is true. God hath not done it to no purpose, in committing his mind to writing, and sending it into the world to teach men. Two things will come at once, assurance that this is God's instrument, and the knowledge of the materials of divine truth. The matter proves the instrument to be divine, and the instrument contains the matter; a double benefit of single labour.

Lastly, I superadd by way of observation and caution, four things.

1. That all that are serious in religion, do agree in the main; so may hold communion. If they have the love of truth in their hearts, if they mean by religion, to prepare themselves for happiness, all these men do agree in main and principal things; therefore they may hold communion; and if they may, they ought, if they ought and do not, they sin. I except only four, atheists, hypocrites, infidels, profane. I would have all other persons own one another. For it is founded in nature, that what is principal, in no time whatsoever, is to be prejudiced by an accessory or circumstant. They that do agree in the great things of religion, they do agree in that that is vital; therefore if they do not agree in other things of less moment, hear what the rule is; that principals in no time whatsoever are to be prejudiced by an accessory. This is true in every matter; therefore it must be concluded, that all that are serious in religion, do agree in the main, and so may hold communion,

2. This

2. This I advise, that you would not make a mixture, a jumble and a confusion in your religion ; of certainties and uncertainties. Let all uncertains be by themselves in a catalogue of disputables, matters of further enquiry : the certains of religion let settle into constitution, and issue in life and practice.

3. I advise you, upon no pretence whatsoever admit any thing into any account of religion, that is in itself absurd, irrational and not self-consistent, That will weaken the faith of the rest, and will be a matter of argument to a tempter.

4. Let there be nothing in practice contrary to principle. For a man may work himself by use, custom, and practice, into a contrary persuasion : he will soon form and fashion himself into a judgment without any ground. And either not to know the necessary rules of life, or to vary from them in practice, is most unnatural, violent and monstrous ; and the monstrousness of it appears in two things,

1. Because it is a contradiction to our faculties. *Eyes to see, and not perceive ; ears to hear, and not understand : hearts to consider, and never the wiser.* 'Tis our care of our souls, regard to God, first to be informed, then answerably reformed. Obedience upon knowledge, ought to be first light in the understanding, and then the will follows.

2. It is a state monstrous ; because it is a state of conviction and condemnation. A man is less than himself, where he doth not understand ; where he doth not understand, he is no body at all. And if he do understand and do contrary, then he cannot be in peace in himself : he cannot be at peace within

within himself, while he lives in disobedience to known truth. For knowledge unfulfilled, is the most troublesome guest that can be entertained; a goad in one's side, a mote in the eye is not more troublesome. He that affects to be an atheist is no longer at rest than God will give him leave; God will be there to awe and command at his pleasure, where he is refused as to love and affection. I have observed, that no men ever stood more in fear of God, than those that most deny, and least love him; and so it will be if men do affect to be atheists, that so they may live exorbitantly and loosely; there is more of slavish fear of God in these men an hundred times, than there is in them that fear, obey and love God.

DISCOURSE LII.

The Venerable NATURE and transcendant benefit of Christian Religion.

ROM. i. 16.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

HAVING been lately upon a very signal and remarkable argument; I thought it was best to pursue it: having laid a foundation to build upon it. I

I have many times endeavoured to declare against the atheistical and profane world : and I have laid down arguments of evidence, and grounds of assurance, beyond what any one can pretend in any other mystery in the world. I have insisted upon these five heads of argument, that give assurance of divine truth, *natural* and *revealed* in scripture ; against atheists, infidels and the profane.

1. The great acknowledgment it hath met with in the several ages of the world.

2. The representation that is hereby made of God, which is agreeable to what man, is made of God to know or think concerning God. The proposals made to us by God, the invitations made by him, the prohibitions, commands, and promises, all these testify of God, and declare worthily concerning him ; insomuch that when a man is awake, it is the sense of his soul ; he will say, I know all these to be true.

3. The ingenuous effect and operations of divine truth, upon the minds and spirits of men, and the influence they have upon their lives and conversation.

4. The suitableness of *natural* truth to man in his state of institution ; and of *revealed* truth to man in his lapsed state, in order to his restitution and recovery.

5. The agency and assistance of the divine Spirit, in pursuance to promote these great truths. All the divine truths, either *natural* or *revealed* in scripture, have all these evidences.

Now

Now if this be so, if these great things in religion, the main truths of God, are of such certainty, we may concur, in sense and resolution, with the apostle, *I am not ashamed of the gospel, &c.*

So have I brought you into these words, as a just inference from what I had before deliberated.

These words are

First, Considerable according to their *form*.

Secondly, Valuable according to their *matter*.

First, According to their *form*, they run in the negative: *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.*

1. Here is less spoken, and more understood, and this is frequent in scripture. It becomes us therefore not to overtalk ourselves; for you see that scripture, in things of great moment, is content to speak modestly. *I am not ashamed, &c.* So *Heb. x. 38. If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* Is that the worst? No surely, God will loath him, and abominate him. So here is less spoken, and more understood; which we call *Meiosis*.

2. Take this account: *negatives* do denounce more strongly; for negatives do exclude all mixture of the contrary. This is a rule, an affirmative is satisfied in one single positive act; but a negative doth always oblige. Negatives are more effectual. But

3. *I am not ashamed.*——This intimates, that there is somewhere matter of *shame*, within the compass of the business: and that is intimated. For tho' the matter of the gospel is matter of great goodness, yet there is matter of shame, because it came in by the fall, which was the occasion of

man's

Now

man's apostacy. Now here man's apostacy, and sin; these are shameful things, which was the occasion of the gospel-revelation. The case of gospel-revelation doth suppose man's degeneracy and apostacy: for the gospel comes in for recovery, for pardon of sin, and reconciliation to God: so that the gospel is matter of relief; yet it puts us in mind of apostacy, which is matter of shame. The grace of the gospel, which comes to repair and to restore, puts us in mind of our ruinous and necessitous condition. When we read the gospel, we have reason to say, *we remember our fault*; Gen. xli. 9. so here is the language of one whose iniquity is forgiven; and whose sin is covered; *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*: so that there is cause of shame in the case; the cause of glory and triumph in the grace of God.

Secondly, Consider the words according to their matter. So we observe three things.

1. The person speaking, and in what capacity.
 2. What it is he saith; the matter wherein he gloried.
 3. Upon what account he doth so express himself.
- The person speaking was the apostle: the matter he doth declare is matter of consolation; and the assurance he hath of true cause of glorying therein: because this *gospel is the power of God*.

The person. *I am not ashamed*, &c. that is, — as a priviledged person; — or as a believer. 1. We will consider him in his *peculiar capacity*, his proper office and employment. To him was committed the dispensation of the gospel; 1 Cor. ix. 17.

so, he was not ashamed, &c. and indeed he had no cause; for it is the noblest employment in the world, to be made use of by God in declaring gospel matters; to be the conveyer of the resolution of the divine will to men, concerning their recovery. I come upon God's errand, and carry a message from God: and indeed this is the honour that God hath bestowed upon the sons of men; for unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak, Heb. ii. 5. What is the world to come there? It is the gospel state. God doth not transact instrumentally the affairs of his church, by the ministry of angels; but by men, such as ourselves are, doth he bring to knowledge the mysteries of God, 2 Cor. iv. 7. To men hath he given gifts of the Holy Ghost, and testimonies by signs and miracles: and so St. Paul had no cause to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. But, 2. In the common capacity of a believer. For it follows after; it is the power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. That takes in all. So observe, the subject recipient of the grace of God, is all mankind; but then the qualification is, a believer. I mean a believer in scripture sense: which I shall reserve to tell you, till I come to speak to the power of God to the salvation of believers. So here the sick patient meets with his physician; the malady with its remedy; the wounded with his cure; the guilty with his pardon: all which tends to hearts-ease, composure and satisfaction of mind. For what is wanting that is not come to hand? So consider him in his proper function; or

take him in the *common capacity* of a believer; the gospel, to every one that receives it, is matter of glory, triumph, hearts-ease, and satisfaction.

It is the power of God unto salvation. The **POWER** of God; — you must not understand power strictly, as limiting to one perfection: for there are three eminent perfections in the divine nature; power, wisdom, and goodness. So that you must not understand power here strictly, to exclude other divine perfections. For elsewhere he saith, *Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. But it is said to be power, to intimate eminently the sufficiency of grace. It is called power, to denote the sufficiency of God's grace in salvation; eminently, to attribute to the efficacy of divine grace these two things, *viz.* regeneration, nativity from above (which is the salvation of this state); glorification, and consummating us in holiness; which is the salvation of the future.

Now to advance this grace, and to raise our apprehensions of it, I proceed in this method;

I. To declare the excellency of it from the *author*; it is the effect of the divine wisdom, the fruit of the divine love.

II. We will consider what it is *in itself*. And

III. Of what *benefit* to us.

I. The *author*; that is God. And God discovers in it the greatness of his *power*; the infiniteness of his *wisdom*; and it is the fruit and effect of abundant *goodness*.

i. The greatness of his *power*. Great are the works of creation and providence: yet if it be lawful

lawful to compare, or put in competition; the work of restoring a peccant and delinquent creature, hath the advantage of the work of creation and providence; for a *privation* is always farther off from a principle of life, than a mere *negation*; for a *privation* is a malignant negation. Now where there was a perfection before, and lost, that is a *privation*. There is bringing a non-entity to an entity, as in all generation and creation: but to recover from a *privation*, to a position, this transcends all ordinary power.

2. It is the effect of his infinite *wisdom*. Tho' the account of Christ's death be *to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness*; yet to them that are led unto participation of it, it is the *manifest wisdom of God*. *Manifest*: why? Because man's malady is desperate upon several accounts. Our malady, the evil of sin, it is the effect of madness and folly; and is that that makes us, through faultiness, liable and obnoxious; it mars our principles; depraves our dispositions; and brings us into slavery and bondage. Now this needed *manifest* wisdom in God, because it did comprehend in it several malignities. Accordingly God hath declared, 1. Cor. i. 30. that *Christ* (who is the matter and substance of the gospel) *is made to us wisdom* against the folly of sin; *righteousness*, against the guilt of sin; *sanctification*, because of our depraved malign disposition; and *redemption*, because we have brought ourselves into bondage, as also under the tyranny of evil habits.

There must be greatness of power to erect such a fabrick and structure as the world is; and excellency of wisdom to administer the affairs of it, in

all variety of cases. Now it is pity any should do the like, that cannot also recover, and restore, if necessity require ; for so should finite and fallible (as we are) if in any error or mistake, be under impossibility of redemption. It is according to *nature's* sense, rather never to have been, than for ever to be irrecoverably miserable : wherefore if I believe God made me, I will also believe God can restore me.

3. It is the fruit of the abundant *goodness* of God. Now that it is the effect of God's goodness, nothing more clear in reason, nothing more plainly said in scripture. Nothing is clearer in reason, considering that God is the first and chiefest good : and then also considering the relation God stands in to his creatures, which is the relation of a father. Earthly parents do but resemble him. Therefore, whatsoever of good or excellency you find here below, you have reason to attribute the same in a transcendant manner to the first and chiefest good. Therefore, that God doth afford us this supply, it is matter of fair belief, if we consider God as in himself, or as related to his creatures. And then 'tis plain in scripture : *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. John iii. 16, 17.* This is very remarkable throughout the holy scripture, that at several instances of time, when God was minded to bless the world, or some particular men in it ; he did then make a further discovery of his Son, than what he had done before : witness all the intermediate exhibitions of him, between the first promise, the seed of the woman breaking the serpent's head ; *Gen. iii. 15.* and the last, *the Son of God manifest*

to undo the works of the devil. 1 *John.* iii. 8. Whenever God had a mind to bless the world, or to gratify any particular person in it, he then declared himself in something concerning his Son. This is a sufficient argument that the grace of the gospel, it was in love and good-will ; and the effect of his kindness, and the fruit of his abundant goodness. But farther it must be attributed to his goodness and compassion, upon these accounts ; 1. Because it was that which we cannot say he was at all bound to do. 2. It was that which he could not be constrained to do. 3. It was that which he was no gainer by ; for our righteousness is no profit to him. 4. God put it upon him to suffer and endure hard measure to bring it about, who was nearest and dearest to him, and least of all deserved to suffer. 5. We may conceive, as it provoked the apostate spirits to envy man, so also to malign God, they not being so well provided for, for ought we know. Take these five considerations, and it will appear, that this salvation is the effect of the love of God. The gospel of Christ is no invention of human reason : man neither prevented God, nor recompenced him after : only the necessity of man's state required it ; and God's goodness afforded it : the excellencies of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power are display'd in it.

'Tis not a mystery now ; though formerly it was *hid from ages and generations*, Col. i. 26. but now it is *the council of God's will declared*.——He that *darkens words without knowledge*, brings us back again to the infancy of the world. It was the imperfection and shortness of the *Mosaical* dispensation

that it was typical, myſtical, ceremonial, ſymbolical; full of ſhadows, things that did vail and darkly repreſent. Obſcurity is imperfection, as darkneſs in compariſon with light. Life and immortality, and all the principles of it are brought to light through the goſpel.

II. and III. I now proceed to the other two conſiderations that do recommend to us the grace of the goſpel; to wit, the conſideration of what it is *in itſelf*; and how *beneficial* to us: and I put theſe two together.

I. It is rare and excellent *matter of knowledge*, matter of admirable ſpeculation.

2. It is a *vital principle*.

I. Rare and excellent *matter of knowledge*, matter of admirable ſpeculation, the excellenteſt matter of contemplation in the world. This would take with a philoſopher: yea, this takes with all perſons whatſoever. A plot well contrived, bravely acted, handſomely managed and carried on. Now here is the revocation of that that was the contrivance of hell. For the ſerpent, as the devil's inſtrument, did plot to bring man into the condemnation of the devil. Now here is the revocation of that proud, insolent, ſaucy, preſumptuous, act of man, that bold act of uſurpation, upon God: I cannot call it by names bad enough, I mean the diſloyalty and affectation of our firſt parents, entering into a confederacy with an apoſtate creature; and that with a deſign upon God himſelf, *to be like God*. Now here is a revocation of this by the full ſubmiſſion and entire ſelf-reſignation of our Lord and Saviour.

The

The former was an act of the greatest disloyalty that a creature could do against the majesty of God. The latter, the submission of our Saviour resigning up his will; an act of justifying God's right and authority. This is rare matter of contemplation to consider and compare these together: here is matter for a man to employ and exercise his thoughts; to consider, as *by one man, condemnation, so by another man, justification*, Rom. v. 18. This is that that will magnify the divine goodness, patience, and commiseration. This should teach us to imitate our Saviour: for that is the true way of reconciliation, by returning to our own place, of submission and entire self-resignation, into a creature-state.

Again, they that are military, how are they pleased to hear of a fight bravely managed! Why, here is the greatest victory that ever was in the world: the victory of our Lord and Saviour, the head of the church, over the devil, sin, and the world; not by arms, but by the spirit of God.

Again, a prince and a Saviour is raised up by God, and sent into the world; not to make havock and spoil, not to ruin and destroy as great warriors have done; not, as in the 2 Sam. xii. 31. *to put people under saws, and harrows of iron, and make them pass through brick-kilns*: a thing intolerable to behold, dreadful to read of; (though in this impotent, incompetent world, many great warriors are made famous for such things, even in unjustifiable war:) and yet this is called *noble*. But now see what it was that *this* prince and Saviour that God hath raised up, see what he doth; — *not destroy men's lives,*
but

but save them ; Luke ix. 56. a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins ; Acts v. 31. a prince and a Saviour indeed, a princely Saviour ! He came to seek and to save that which was lost, Mat. xviii. 11. This is a fight for angels, this is that the angels desire to look downward by the church, to understand ; Eph. iii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 12. and we sorry creatures, who are concerned in it, we neglect it. This is the first ; this is rare matter of contemplation. But

2. It is not only admirable matter of knowledge, but also it is a vital principle ; not of natural life, but of divine ; and that upon two accounts.

First, As satisfying the reason of our minds, by removal of fears and doubts, by the life of faith ; affiance and trust in God.

Secondly, As being as a byass upon our spirits, as it reforms our spirits and lives, as conveying and communicating principles of goodness and righteousness ; by which we are made partakers of the divine nature.

The sum and substance of the gospel is comprehended in two things, *repentance from dead works, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.* And it is not possible from any power whatsoever, that a man be made happy any other ways than thus ; if he hath done amiss, that he do (as far as in him lies) undo it again, and go to God in and through Christ for pardon and forgiveness. These do go together and encourage each other ; in as much as no man repents, who doth not believe ; nor can any believe, who doth not repent. To believe, there is requisite

quisite an internal disposition and preparation of the subject, as well as a divine promise to build upon, a man is not in capacity of a vital act of faith, if he do not repent and condemn himself for sin, *John v. 44. Can you believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not honour from God?* The same is in all cases of inordinacy and sin. Repentance and faith in the gospel are indifferently used: *he that believeth on the son hath eternal life, John iii. 36.* Now he doth not really believe, who doth not truly intend to do answerably. The scripture calls *believing* on Christ, *receiving of him, John i. 12.* If we receive him, then we receive him *such as he is*, and to *such effects and purposes as God sent him for*; now God *sent him to bless us, in turning us from our iniquities, Acts iii. 26.* The scripture useth *synecdoches*; sometimes *believing* is put for the whole of religion; sometimes *repenting*; sometimes *fearing*; sometimes *love*. If we would not be partial, nor deceive ourselves, we must always take in all concomitant acts. Scripture, as the rule of faith, is not *one single text* (which may be short and intend another thing) but *the fullness of scripture*. In all other cases, he that believes doth according as he thinks. Faith includes an intention of new obedience. 'Tis a fair matter of belief, pardon of sin to them who repent; and sin not pardonable to impenitents; so that our satisfaction and reformation go together, strengthen and enliven each other. Now if any man tell me here of *Judas* his repentance; I answer, I am not to call *Judas's* a genuine, ingenuous, evangelical repentance; but it was a mal-content and desperateness, arising

arising from horrid guilt, and a havocked conscience. But the grace of the gospel gives us this advantage, it doth encourage our faith, and leads us to repentance; because if we do repent, it is a matter fairly credible that divine goodness will pardon: and then whosoever doth believe, and cast himself upon the goodness of God declared in Christ, undoubtedly he sees the ugly nature, and deadly consequence of sin, and doth disintangle himself from it, and engage himself never to do the like.

First. I may with great reason say, that the matter of the gospel is a vital principle, as it satisfies the reason of our mind, by removal of fears and doubts, so settling us at rest and peace, and creating within ourselves, quietness, composure, and settlement; as hereby seeing and knowing that we are out of all danger and fear, notwithstanding we have given God offence. Now that this is vital, I refer myself to that that is commonly acknowledged, *to live, is to be well*: for a man to be at hearts-ease, peace and quietness within himself. A man that hath been arraigned and condemned, he is alive till he be executed; but his life is worse than death. *To live, is to be well.* Now for a man to be out of fear and danger from God, whom he hath offended; this is a vital principle: and a man is sure, that, in and thro' Christ, upon his repentance, he shall be pardoned: this is gospel-knowledge. And in the intellectual nature, a principle of knowledge, *as to the understanding*, is vital; as well as an habitual disposition, *as to the will*. Now what more satisfaction can there be to the reason of our minds, what more

more tending to the quiet of our consciences, than to be assured, in a matter of such importance to us, that God, to whom we are so liable and obnoxious by transgression and sin, is the most lovely, placable and reconcilable being, of himself, through the perfection of his own nature ; and that in the grace of the gospel, he is absolutely resolv'd and engaged, by his voluntary determination and promise, to pardon sin, in and through Christ, to all who repent and believe the gospel ? And this, and nothing less than this, is the matter of the gospel. This is *to be accepted, in and through Christ* ; this is the true explanation, God, in and through Christ, will pardon sin to all that leave off to sin, and ask him forgiveness, and return to duty. This is the true explanation of *justification by imputed righteousness* : and whatsoever is beyond this, is imaginary, and will deceive any man. That God hath declared himself in and through Christ, for the acceptance of sinners : that he will accept of their honest meaning and good endeavours, though they are imperfect and will not bear a strict examination in respect of justice : he will accept us if we honestly intend, though in act we are imperfect and fall short : these things are greatly for our satisfaction : for I tell you, a man lives more by satisfaction of mind, than by meat and drink. I therefore may with great reason call the doctrine of the gospel a vital principle, because it gives satisfaction to the reason of man's mind. Now see how it gives satisfaction. For this being supposed, and proving true ;

I. Through

1. Through the *revelation* of the gospel, that God will pardon sin, in and through Christ, to all that repent, leave off to sin, ask him forgiveness, and return to duty; that he will accept our honest meaning and true endeavours, though in act, we be short and imperfect. In the first place, we are sure of God; and to God only are we obnoxious.
2. We know his *terms*, and beyond these terms he will not require; and further he will not be so severe to examine; so we know the worst.
3. These terms are fair and *equal* in themselves, and fit to stand: for is it not fit that an offender should do what is in him, to undo what he hath unduly done? And what else is required, but *repentance from dead works, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*. Acts xx. 21. Are not these fit to stand? Is it not fit that I being a creature, should undo that that I have unduly done.
4. They are not only fit and just, but *good for us*. For it is impossible for a man to be happy unless reconciled in his nature, mind, and will, to God, goodness and truth. I cannot be happy if under the power of lust: I cannot be happy unless discharged from naughtiness of spirit. I cannot be happy by God in a way of opposition to God; but by submission and subordination, and by being, in nature, mind, and will, reconciled to him.
5. These terms are made *possible* through the grace of God, and the assistance of the divine spirit, so that there is nothing in the whole world that we have more reason to desire and pray for, than

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that they be verified and fulfilled, and accomplished in us.

Thus it is a vital principle, as satisfying the reason of our minds; such is the grace of the gospel, such the contents thereof, that they tend wholly to the satisfying the mind of man, if he will use his reason. There are no two things more inward to us, than satisfaction to our reason, that we may be at quiet; and the settling of our minds in frame and temper, that we may enjoy ourselves. In these *two* the life of man consists; and these depend on the knowledge of the gospel. But

Secondly, The matter of the gospel is not only a vital principle, as it is *satisfactory* to the *reason* of our minds, but also as it is a *byass* upon our *spirits*; an habitual temper and disposition constantly affecting us, and inclining us right toward our main and principal object, that is, *God*; and freely carrying us out in ways of *goodness, righteousness and truth*. God is especially known to us by righteousness and holiness; and if we be like God, we must be so too; and then we harmonize with God, when we are in reconciliation with righteousness, goodness and truth. The matter of the gospel, when received, is an internal disposition and byass upon the mind of man: for it is inwardly received, so as to dye and colour the soul; so as to settle a temper and constitution; and in this way it is restorative to our natures. — That which we do but indifferently by our ability, we are able to do dexterously and easily by custom. This is a true rule, that which the original of our being hath made us able to do, by giving

ing us powers and faculties ; that we do easily and with content, after we have acquired a habit, and are receivers of God's grace. Through the divine grace and assistance we are both able and freely willing, and so go pleasurably on in the ways of religion and conscience. For God persuades us, and *the law of the spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, frees us from the law of sin and death*, Rom. viii. 2. The principles of christian religion do not only controul *external* intemperate and exorbitant *acts*, which are visible to by-standers, but regulate the inclinations, the *inward* frame and *temper* of mind, govern the first motions and the *elicit* acts that are performed within a man's self. As Christ said to God, *not my will, but thy will*, Luke xxii. 42. so we must through participation of Christ, be let into a temper of meekness, patience, gentleness to our fellow-creatures, and a readiness to close with all advantages to gratify and do good, and a submissive self-denying frame in respect of God. By our *faith we have victory over the world*. What is the meaning of that? By faith we see and apprehend things that are not visible to human reason, to men that are of carnal spirits : but we see things of high importance ; and we are so well resolved of them, that we make faith the governing principle of our lives ; we will not lose our share and interest in them, for things of a petty concernment. *By faith we overcome the world* ; faith makes things that are future, as of present existence ; and by faith we see these to be of ten thousand times more value than the things of this world. *By faith we overcome the world* : by this

eye

eye of faith, things that are great and powerful in the world, are seen through, and prove not effectual to drive a man away from his true concernment. Hence our lives and manners are of another fashion; hence it comes to pass, that these men are men of other lives than the men of this world, as is truly represented in the 5th chapter of the book of *Wisdom*. *This was he, whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life, madness; and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints?* By the spirit of the gospel, we are transformed into another nature, life and temper. Neither do I terminate the ultimate issue of Christ in the happy effects of renovation in ourselves, and reconciliation to God; (tho' these are benefits transcendant to all worldly wealth, greatness and power;) but this is the least I can say of the grace of the gospel. I have further to say; which I am sure you cannot hear, nor I speak, *it doth not now appear*, neither can we now bear the thought of *what we shall be when God shall be all in all*, and all enmity shall be subdued, 1 Cor. ii. 9. If you are able to bear it, think of this one thing; what we may come to at last, by a true improvement and right use of our natural powers and faculties, and by the ordinary assistance of God. This you may expect, that *Adam*, as God made him, might have arrived to, and might have come to, if he had not voluntarily transgressed. But then, farther I propose to you what we may ascend to by being endued with power from above; which *Adam* could not pretend

pretend to. These are *two* things, and very different; what man may come to, by the improvement of himself, in the right use of himself, his natural power and faculties, directing himself by his ordinary rules, as he is God's creature, and may attain his natural state and end; and what man may come to, as he is endued with power from above, as he is assumed into a relation to God, by Jesus Christ; as he is a member of that body, whereof Christ is the head, as the adoption of God by Jesus Christ, and as he is so enlivened by the divine spirit; as did not belong to man in the state of innocency.— But these are not things of our present state; for even *Adam*, as he was made, was not fit. *For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.* But now I have told you more than I myself can comprehend; but yet this we have, *1 Cor. xv. chapter from the 16th verse to the end of the chapter*: where you may see that now, through the grace of the gospel, we have very many high and great priviledges. But I am now passed to those things that are within the confines of the state of glory.

And so much may suffice for account of this. The apostle speaks very moderately, when he saith *he was not ashamed of the gospel*; he had no reason so to be, because the grace of the gospel is matter of rare and excellent contemplation; and is also a vital principle.

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DISCOURSE LIII.

The Venerable NATURE and transcendant benefit of Christian Religion.

ROM. i. 16.

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

I Have endeavoured to recommend to you the gospel of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, from these three heads of argument.

1. From it's *author*, *God* himself. It is the effect of his infinite wisdom and knowledge, and the fruit of his abundant goodness, benignity, and compassion.

2. From the *qualities* of the doctrine of the gospel in itself considered.

3. From its *usefulness to us*. Of these I have spoken.

Now I proceed to the subject recipient, the receiver of this great benefit ; *the power of God to salvation, to every one that believes.*

Say what you will of the grace of the gospel, represent it as the effect of infinite wisdom, and as the fruit of abundant goodness of God ; yet if there be an incapable recipient, there is no effect attained.

The subject of this grace of the gospel, is every one that *believes*. And indeed this is a point of the

most serious consideration in all the world ; for this intimates our charge. All hitherto is done without our thought, but now here is our charge, if we have any care of our soul's safety, we will not fall short of the salvation which God hath appointed, and our Saviour hath wrought, through a failure, in putting forth an act which fairly we may through divine direction, conduct and guidance. But to give you an explication of this belief. This *believing* must be taken in a very comprehensive sense. The scripture doth suppose that every one that doth not give himself up to the doctrine of Christ, and the doctrine of the gospel, the scripture doth suppose he doth not believe it. And the scripture doth suppose, if any one believes the doctrine of the gospel, he gives himself to be guided by it, *John iii. 36. he that believeth on the son of God, hath everlasting life.* To believe is to know and obey. It is no scripture faith, that doth not carry along with it, answerable practice. Answerable to this, you have it in many places called, *the obedience of faith*, Rom. xvi. 26. He doth not really believe, who doth not do accordingly. We do not by any breach of charity, if any one lives in the breach of our Saviour's commands, to call him an unbeliever : the scripture calls believing in Christ, *receiving him*, John i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* If you take him, you must take him as he is, as a king to rule and govern you ; as a prophet, to instruct you ; as a Saviour, to save you. How inconsistent is it for any man to think that he must go to
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God, in and through Christ, and yet that he may live as he list? In religion let not one thing rise up against another. The reason why we should take in all collateral acts, though the scripture expresseth but one, is plain from that scripture, *Acts v. 31. a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.* We all acknowledge that it is faith that is immediate to remission of sins; and you have here a signal place of scripture, and faith is omitted, and repentance put in; and repentance doth include faith, for repentance were desperate, if no hope, and without faith; this shews that God means they should all go together; and that scripture intends all, though it speak but of one. In all other cases, we do according as we believe; why should it not be here also?

And this for explication of this belief. The subject recipient of this great grace, is every one that *believeth*: and for the amplification of the object, the apostle descends to particulars. *To the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* By the *Jew*, you all know is meant the peculiar chosen people of God: by the *Greek* here you are to understand the residue of mankind; *Jew* and *Greek* are as much as *Jew* and *Gentile*; so that here you may observe two things.

1. The *order* of this divine dispensation.
2. The *extent* of it: to the *Jew* first, and to all other people.

I will gloss upon this in six particulars, and so pass it over.

1. I observe, that God did not first *desert* the *Jews*; but they did forsake their own mercies.

For it is said here, *to the Jew first*: and also the apostle tells them, Acts xiii. 46. *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles.* God is not wont lightly to begin, nor causelessly to desist. I give you this caution: never upon any occasion attribute to God the evil of sin, and the evil of punishment only in the second place: for the evil of sin is purely our own; and the evil of punishment, we are the cause of that too. Whatsoever creature doth perish, *his destruction is of himself*, Hof. xiii. 9. It is of the grace and goodness of God, that he begins with any of his creatures, and the same goodness will carry him on, while the case remains compassionate: *to the Jew first*.

2. I observe that the *Jew* hath no cause at all to be aggrieved or offended at the *Gentiles* entertaining the faith of the gospel, and receiving the christian religion, which they refused; and that according to the tenour of the gospel, pretending interest in God, and laying claim to the promises: because you see, it is to the *Jew first*, and *after*, to the *Gentiles*.

3. I observe in the third place, that while the truth of the gospel was under a darker manifestation, it was also under a narrower confinement; for the *Jew* had it *first*; then the *Gentile* had it *after*: Acts xiv. 16, 17. Rom. xi. 14, 18.

4. It warrants that I have to speak, and all you have to believe, *to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile*: the *Jew* hath the priority, but we are included,

ed, Gal. iii. 28. *there is neither Jew nor Greek, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*, Rom. ii. 6th to the 10th.

This is the grace of the gospel : no impediment to any man's faith ; he is not prejudiced from his relation, state, or country. This is our privilege, that live in the latter ages of the world.

5. I observe hence the *engagement* that is upon the *Gentiles* to God. For now the *childrens bread* is allowed those that *were dogs*. Mat. xv. 26, 27.

The *Gentiles* are allowed *childrens bread* : *to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile*.

6. Observe here the *recollection* of all in one : we all agree in substance, though the *Jew* had the priority.

These are the improvements that I make from these superadded words, *to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile*.

I will make two observations from the whole ; and then a use or two.

1. The first observation is this : there is all the reason in the world, that we should *acknowledge* God eminently, for his grace and goodness in our salvation, and have a just resentment of it. For the doctrine of the gospel is *the power of God to the salvation of man*. What doth *salvation* import ? Salvation, from the first to the last, doth include several progressions that are in the passage from the death of sin, and the carnal mind, unto the spiritual state, and divine life : or there is a double salvation, if you will distinguish, *the salvation of grace*, and *the salvation of glory*. The former is the *inchoation*, the latter the *consummation*. While not the for-

mer, there is an impossibility of the latter. For if here we are not reconciled, we cannot be happy by any society, or converse whatsoever, if we ourselves are in an evil spirit. They are mightily mistaken that distinguish this state and the future, *by place only*: for the *main* distinction is in state: only they differ in degree. If you could imagine a man that is unregenerate, and in a carnal mind, and in love with sin, in heaven; place him where you will, he cannot be happy; because he is not naturaliz'd to his condition. The doctrine of the gospel is no invention of human reason: man did not prevent God in it by any thought of it before hand, or any desire: man merited it not at God's hands, neither hath after recompenced it. Only the necessity of man's state required it, and God's goodness afforded it. 'Tis persuasive and affecting in the strongest way of motive and argument, which are proper ways of acting in the intellectual world: the excellency of infinite wisdom, power and goodness, is displayed in it, and God, by it, works powerfully in us, and upon us; and we find ourselves strongly wrought on: and this commanding in the highest way of reason. No better way of arguing than by strong reason, and convincing argument; and no such conviction, no fuller satisfaction in any undertaking, than in the business of regeneration and conversion. And upon this account, it is called the *power of God to salvation*. That is the first observation; the acknowledgment and thankfulness that is due to God; and this is worthy on our part, and it is no more than a just, equal and fair resentment of what God hath done.

2. As

2. As the gospel is *the power of God unto salvation*; so it is superadded in the text, *to every one that believeth*: hence I observe, that wheresoever the grace of God is afforded to any spiritual effect, there we ourselves are also to act. Wheresoever, or in what measure soever, God doth appear by his grace, there is something to be done in us, and by us. Let not us deceive ourselves: our actual salvation doth suppose and depend upon some act of ours; for if there be incredulity in the case, the grace of God hath such a stop, as the sun hath by the thick body of the earth. Our salvation doth suppose a disposition in us, and an act of our own; and really *no man can be converted without his own act, without his own consent*. For to believe and repent are our vital acts. But if any one say to me, hereby you disparage God's grace, and make it less: I answer, not at all; this makes us not less beholden to God; for God gives us whatsoever is good. The scripture tells us, that the wisdom was the wisdom of *Solomon*: and the scripture saith, God put it into his heart, *1 Kings x. 24.* David gives God thanks that it was in their hearts to offer willingly, *1 Chron. xxix. 13, 14.* There is an absolute necessity in the thing, that the second cause concur as a vital principle, where the first cause is as a pure efficient. It doth not less make us depend upon God: because it is he also that gives us the power whereby we are able. He cannot repent in us, nor believe in us: but he gives us ability. He may co-operate as a pure efficient; but he cannot co-operate as a vital cause. Some men are of the thought, that man's conversion must
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be brought about as St. *Paul's* was, and then they think they cannot but repent and believe. But let me tell you, there is no expecting of any such application to men now, because *the gospel is the power of God to salvation*. St. *Paul* tells the *Galatians*, Gal. iii. 1. *That before their eyes, Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth crucified, and slain among them.* You all know that our Saviour was crucified at *Jerusalem*, not in *Galatia*; and yet the apostle says, that *before their eyes he had been evidently set forth crucified and slain*. Why? Because they had had a rational account and explication of the true notion and intention of the death of Christ. The business of Christ's death was so declared, that they might understand it twenty times better, than they which had ocular inspection. They to whom God doth apply in a rational way, illuminating their understanding, shewing them the reason of things; these are more effectually and powerfully wrought upon, than those to whom things are represented only by their senses. For I am a thousand times more confident of my reason, than of any sense. We have a full explication of the reason of our Saviour's coming, and a true notion of his death; and this is much more than the appearance that was made to *Saul* as he was travelling: have therefore no such expectation, that conversion is to be brought about in such a way; for this way that we have now, is more powerful. If we be not convinced in this great matter that the gospel doth declare; we should not be affected if Christ did appear to us as he did to St. *Paul*; for this is transcendant, as being satisfaction to our reasons

reasons and understandings. And these are my two observations, that there is due to God thankful *acknowledgment*, and that it becomes us to have deep resentment of it. We having disabled our faculties, God hath employed his own wisdom and goodness to find out a way ; and he hath declared the doctrine of the gospel, *the power of God to salvation* : and this proves short and ineffectual, unless it meets with faith in us ; you are to understand God doth not do all without you ; *the gospel is the power of God to salvation*, but it is, *to them that believe*.

And thus have I run over the doctrinal part ; also have made explication of the several terms, and suggested to you the several emphasis's that are in the words. The *applicatory* part remains, to which I now betake myself.

Having made appear to you, that the doctrine of the gospel, both in respect of its proper virtue and efficiency, as also in respect of divine intention, is effectual to the bringing of men to salvation ; then are you, *first* to acquaint yourselves thoroughly with the tenour and terms of the gospel, to pass judgment upon it, to consider well all the circumstances that make up the case ; particularly these three ; *our contracted impotency and great deformity by our fall ; the necessity of recovery and restoration, or else ruin to eternity ; the efficacy and the freeness of the grace of God to conversion*. So that we may resolve our minds ; tho' our case be very forlorn, because of our defec-tion and apostacy from the innocency of our crea-tion, and self-contracted misery ; yet nothing is desperate, nothing is impossible in the case ; but our recovery, thro' the grace of God, is fairly easy.

And

And being thus prepared by such knowledge and apprehensions ; in the *second* place, *pursue the intent* of the gospel in your own spirits, and in conjunction of yourselves with others, by free communication in converse ; for this is certain, and found by experience, that the only way to do a man's self good in intellectuals and spirituals, is to do good to others in converse, and carry others on with us. No man gains so much as by teaching. No man so improves in intellectuals, as by communication ; it is here, as with the widow's oil, the more you spend, the more you have ; which doth much commend intellectuals, that *they increase by expence*. If a man hath brought himself to some perfection by consideration, he will make himself much more, by free communication, and in free communication, you will have another suggest that which, it may be, you did not think of : so he will put you upon further consideration, or else preserve you from presumption. None are of such modest spirits, as they who live in free communication and converse. This I subjoin, for the improving of a man's self in the way of the gospel, and answering the vigorous spirit of the gospel ; *be communicative. Be ready to render a reason of the hope that is in you, 1 Pet. iii. 15.* This is the highest purpose of all our meetings together ; free communication, to answer every man's doubts ; to give everyone satisfaction. It is the highest service, and greatest courtesy we can do one another, freely to tell what we have conceived, what cause we have to believe such or such a thing : and we do ourselves most effectual good, when we carry on others with us, when

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we do good unto others. To promote this motion ; there is nothing is more unnatural, or of greater deformity in the whole world, than that an intelligent agent should have the reason of things in his mind, and that it should not give law and rule, in temper, life, and action.

The first thing in religion, is to teach a man's own mind ; to satisfy a man's self, in the reason of things ; to look to the grounds and assurance that a man hath for his thoughts, apprehensions and persuasions : but then it is prodigious and monstrous, if *that* wherein my reason is resolved and satisfied, should not have such an influence upon my mind, as to establish me in life accordingly, and to be a law and rule, both in temper and practice. The reason of the thing is as much our rule, as sense is to sensitives, or the nature of the things, to inanimates. Now you would think it horrid and prodigious, for these things not to follow the guidance of their natures : but it is much more horrid in rationals, not to comply with the principles of reason and understanding ; because we were made more sufficient for our connatural acts, than either sensitives or inanimates. That which we call in morals, *against the order of reason*, is so much more horrid, unnatural, and prodigious than in inferior nature, for *sensitives* to go against the guidance of sense, or for *inanimates* against the force of nature ; it is I say so much more unnatural, as *intelligent agents* transcend in perfection *sensitives* and *inanimates* : reason being as proportionable to its effects, as any principle in inferior nature.

There

There are two orders or ranks of creatures in this visible world ; the order of *sensitives*, and of *inanimates*. The world of *sensitives*, they are true and infallible ; they are true to that which is their predominant principle ; that is, *sense*, and they never vary : and *inanimates*, they certainly tend according to their nature. Now the principle in the higher order of creatures, *viz.* of rational and intelligent agents, is *apprehension of the reason of things*. Now the reasons of things are eternal ; they are not subject to any power ; we practise not upon them ; it is our wisdom to observe them ; and our goodness, to comply with them. But they are as much our rule, as *sense* to *sensitives*, and the *impetus* of nature to *inanimates*. Now you would think it monstrous, prodigious and unnatural, for the sun to give over shining, for heavy things to ascend, for light things to descend, for fire not to burn : yet it is more prodigious for any one that is an intelligent agent, and voluntary, not to comply with the reason of things ; because he is a creature of a higher order, and his principle is more excellent. By which you may see the degeneracy of us mortals ; in that the state below us remains in the same principle it was created in, but we men do neither find out the reasons of things, nor comply with them. Our deformity is more because our perfection is more, and the order of our being is higher, and we were made more sufficient to our connatural acts, than either *sensitives* or *inanimates* to their proper acts ; and we use to say, the fault is greater in him that is in a higher state.

This

This is to awaken men to understand the reason of the gospel, and to consider it ; that it may become the reason of our mind : and if it be the reason of our mind, it will be a *vital principle* of life.

Now the intent of the gospel being such as it is, (*viz.* to us the greatest *good* possible) and it being connatural to us to run out upon enquiry, *who will show us any good ?* Psal. iv. 6. it is matter of great astonishment, that it should be so neglected, that it should take so little effect. It must be either unbelief or gross self-neglect, careless inadvertency, that makes men continue in a state of evil and sin, since the intent of the gospel is so much for our advantage ; so much being done *on God's part* towards man's salvation, and so much reason for it *on man's part*.

1st, So much being done on God's part. For man's *salvation* doth import *man's happiness*. Salvation from first to last, doth include the several stages and progressions in the passing from the death of sin, from the carnal mind, from the corrupt nature, into a spiritual state and divine life. This is the salvation of this state : and the consummation of this is the salvation of the other. Do but consider how much God hath done upon this account. I pray consider, *1st*, the great *encouragements* that God hath given to sinners to return ; the many promises and pathetical invitations God hath made to sinners ; promises to receive them ; promises to enable them ; promises to reward them. How did our Saviour mourn over *Jerusalem* ? How did God by his prophets every where complain upon man's remissness ?

remissness? 2dly, The *discovery* that hath been made by natural light, or revealed in scripture, of a future existence: first by natural light, then by the gospel our Saviour *bath brought life and immortality to light*. Then, 3dly, No such *motives* and arguments for any things in the whole world as there are for leaving off sin, and reconciliation to righteousness. And, *lastly*, the great *assistance* of the divine spirit. Consider these, and see if we are not greatly to be blamed for neglecting our own souls. Again,

2dly, Considering there is so much reason for it on man's part; that it is not only just and fit in itself, but good for us, that we should repent from all dead works, and believe in the Lord Jesus. First, *just and fit, to repent*: for can any one think that it is reasonable, by an after act, to justify an act of arrogance, to defend an act of insolence against his sovereign? If he doth not he must repent: for whosoever commits a sin, and doth not repent of it, he lives to justify it; if a man do commit a sin, if he do not revoke it by repentance, he virtually lives in it. Secondly, repentance is *good* for us; for without it, we are self-condemned, and in an incapacity of happiness. For a man under guilt of sin, is either scared, or else tormented. Self-condemnation I take to be the very life of hell, the worst ingredient in hell: and a man must be self-condemned, unless he repent after the committing of sin. Repentance doth ease a man's mind. He that doth repent, would make satisfaction, and doth recal it, what he can; for he that doth repent is of this mind, that he would not do the thing if it were to do

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do again. And then there is an incapacity of happiness without repentance. It is not possible for a man to be made happy, by putting him into a *happy place*, unless he be in a *good state*. A man is not happy in the state wherein he is not qualified. We are not capable of happiness, unless we be restored to innocency by repentance, and renewed in part. The gospel is the restitution of us to the state of our creation, to the use of our principles, to our healthful constitution, and to acts connatural to us. And lastly, under the grace of God, it is not only *possible*, but a thing of *easy* and fair performance ; for though without God, we are insufficient to do any thing, yet through the grace of God we are enabled to do all things that the gospel requires. In this way, the mind of man may have assurance and satisfaction. It is a compassionate case for him that is supreme and sovereign, to pity an unavoidable necessity and misery, and to pardon so far as the case is compassionate. Now we are in the hands of him that is primarily and originally good ; and he will certainly commiserate every case, so far as it is compassionate. Now the case of a sinner is compassionate, if he be penitent, because he was never better than finite and fallible. Nothing is more credible, than that the first and chiefest goodness will save to the utmost extent of disposition in the subject.

On the other side, consider we God as the first and chiefest goodness ; it is worthy of him, and in itself good that evil be controuled ; therefore I cannot conceive, but that the goodness of God

God must engage him to punish obstinate sinners. Parents think it becoming to punish an obstinate child.——Consider we him also in a relative capacity, as he is the governour of the world : he is engaged to maintain order, so it is not comely in God to pass over contumacy in sin, without challenging or controuling. So that as I do easily see that the case of a sinner that is penitent is compassionate ; so on the other side I cannot conceive that a contumacious impenitent sinner can be pardoned, since it is in itself good, and also worthy God (either considered *absolutely in himself* as the first and chiefest good, or *relatively*, as the governour of the world) to controul and challenge wilful and pertinacious transgressors.

Consider we, the unreasonableness of sin in *three* particulars.

1st, In acts of impiety against God. Can any reason be imagined for these. For, God being the original of man's being, the center of his soul ; his ultimate end, and every way well deserving of him ; can any give a reason why any man should be rebellious against him ? Is there any temptation to sober reason unto impiety ? What can be alledged to induce men to affront and offer contempt to God ?

2^{dly}, What can be alledged for intemperance ; since nature is content with very few things ? Why should any one overdo in this kind ? A man is better in health, and strength, if he be temperate. We enjoy ourselves more in a sober and temperate use of ourselves. What aches, diseases, pains, and sicknesses

nesses, doth a man bring upon himself, if he be intemperate? How many of these are founded in excess?

gally, Sins of unrighteousness; ——— whosoever doth an unrighteous act, he doth justify all the villainies in the world, even highwaymen and robbers. For it is the same thing; you are sinners in the same kind; for all is unrighteousness; there is difference only in degree. One may offend more in human laws: but the offence is the same in righteous laws. ——— Besides, what confidence can we ourselves have, in respect of others? For no man will think better of others than of himself. He that is guilty of unrighteousness, cannot but be jealous, and think the same of others: so that he can have no confidence in others.

Thus you see the unreasonableness of sin. Yet because of ill use, custom, and practice, difficulty is pretended, and it is thought hard to be virtuous. Do not beasts observe the rules of their nature? — That which religion requires, is to find out the reason of things, and to comply with it; to move according to the dictates of reason; and to observe the order of the end; to avoid such things as will do us harm; in short, to live according to the difference of good and evil; to do the *one* and to avoid the *other*; which are not positive and arbitrary impositions; but they arise from conveniences and from inconveniences of our natures, states and relations. So that the sinner is a person of violent practice, and one who doth unnatural acts. And an impenitent is one of a senseless and stupid mind.

The things that are the bane of mankind; and that do alienate us from God, are, *sensuality, worldly-mindedness* and *wickedness*. The two former of these do sink the creation of God below itself; so that it doth not continue the same that God made it. A man, by *these*, is rendered utterly unfit for converse and communication with God. For, by *these*, he sinks himself below his kind, and makes himself equal to the beast that perishes. And by the latter, (*viz.* wickedness) man passeth into a clean contrary nature, becomes an enemy to God, and makes God an enemy to him.

Against sensuality and worldliness, I propose for remedy, the application of the principles of reason and virtue, and the applying of our highest faculties to their end and object. For while the mind is employed in heavenly meditation, or in extracting spiritual notions from material things, it is employed worthy of intellectual nature: and our proper business is to be thus employed: by which the concerns of the body will be either laid aside, or moderately engaged in, and regarded. Whereas this power of our souls is, as it were, lost, where men use themselves as if they had no spirits, but were altogether body, or as if the body were the principal or governing part. And in such a condition are they, who cannot understand what we mean, when we bid them *lift up their hearts to God*. For the candle of God's lighting within them, whereby they are qualified to find God out in his works, and to follow him in his ways, either it burns so dim that they cannot see by it, or it is quite put out.

out. For it is found by experience, that the malignity of the heart doth blind the understanding: and true wisdom will never abide in a malicious and wicked soul. ——— There are indeed souls that are so active and so well acquainted with heavenly meditation; that they very well know what is the food of souls, and have the foretaste of the delight and pleasure of the other world. And certainly these men have the greatest satisfaction in their lives, of any other persons. For there is more satisfaction in meditation, in reading, in conference about divine things, in application to God by prayer and other holy exercises, than in any bodily pleasure whatsoever. For all *bodily exercise* comes off with disquiet of spirit: whereas in the other way there is refreshment every moment; there is new acquisition: for if there be any thing like infinite in the creation under God, it is in invention, and the power of thinking. This is the advantage of *intellectual exercise* above *bodily exercise*. The one works inwardly, is still on the getting hand, and is still in use; for what this man got he hath still in store; and that which is got in this way of intellectual employment, will still improve by use: and what we get, we always keep; for knowledge is no burden: whereas, in things of the body, *use and want, spend, and be ever after, without*. But it is no wonder, that they who never acquainted themselves with retiring from the world, know not what these things mean, who mind only worldly things, and know no more than what belongs to the animal life. But on the other side, if a man make application to

God, he acts with all his might; he recollects himself, and gathers himself into himself, that he may receive from God, what God hath to communicate. And the things that God hath, and doth offer, are so great and glorious, that our narrow vessels had need to be wholly emptied to make room for them.

Therefore, the mind's substruction from the world, is necessary, by way of preparation and holy meditation, to beget in us such a disposition, by which we may receive from God. A man that can enjoy himself alone, by consideration, and exercising his faculties, may run thro', as it were, all times: for a man may live *before* he lives, and *after*, in this way: he may, by reading, acquaint himself with what was in former times; and by what things are, he may guess what are to come. If he reflect upon things past, and view things that are present, and take a prospect of things to come, as the effect of causes that are in being; in this way rational faculties have sufficient employment; whereas they that are always drudging in the affairs of the world, and never enjoy themselves alone, will find little satisfaction in these things.

It is the proper work of reason in man, to find God out in his works, and to follow him in his ways.

It is the proper employment of our intellectual faculties to be conversant about God, to conceive aright of him; and then to resemble and imitate him. Religion is an obligation upon us to God, the *first* motion of religion is to understand what is true of God: and the *second* is to express it in our lives,

lives, and to copy it out in our works. The *former* is our wisdom ; and the *latter* is our goodness. In these two consist the health and pulchritude of our minds. For health to the body is not more than virtue is to the mind. A depraved and vicious mind is as really the sickness and deformity thereof, as any foul and loathsome disease is to the body. And as really as these tend to the death and dissolution of the soul and body ; so the vices of the mind tend to the separation of God and the soul.

What is short and inferior to *converse with God* doth require a recess from worldly business and employment. A man can hardly compose an ordinary poem without this : but for the noblest employment, *receiving from God and making acknowledgment to him* ; is a man fit for this, in the hurry of business and confusion of things ? It is also observed that this life of privacy and retirement is either the best, or the worst life : for, in it, we do as God doth ; or we imitate the devil. He who can be alone to his own content, in measure and degree is as God is : for what other employment had God from eternity, but satisfying himself in his own goodness ? But as this may be *the best* ; so it may be the worst life : for a man may be employed in contriving mischief, as the devil is, whose work is said to be to bring men into condemnation. If therefore we are alone to ill purposes and designs ; then solitariness and retirement do make the worst life. But if man be retired and alone, and not intellectually employed ; then through stupidity and dulness, he sinks down into the state of a beast : for take it for a cer-

tain truth, to be *well* and *unactive* do not consist together. No man is well without action ; nothing is more irksome than idleness. A man must use his faculties, and put himself upon action. Therefore if he be alone and unactive, he cannot be well. In all honest labour there is satisfaction ; whereas sluggishness and neglect are unaccountable, and unsatisfactory.

The mind diverted from God, wanders in darkness and confusion. But being directed to him, soon finds its way, and doth receive from him in a way that is abstracted from the noise of the world, and withdrawn from the call of the body ; having shut the doors of our senses, to recommend ourselves to the divine light, which readily enters into the eye of the mind that is prepared to receive it. For there is light enough of God in the world, if the eye of our minds were but fitted to receive it, and let it in. It is the incapacity of the subject, where God is not ; for nothing in the world is more knowable than God. God only is absent to them that are indisposed and disaffected. For a man cannot open his eye, nor lend his ear, but every thing will declare more or less of God. It is our fault that we are estranged from him : for God doth not withdraw himself from us, unless we first leave him : the distance is occasioned through our unnatural use of ourselves.

They who live the life of sense, are apt to be beaten off from all regard to God, by these occurrences that discompose their minds. But they who are separated from the body, who sit loose to earthly

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ly things which obstruct the mind, do easily receive the divine light. Whereas those that are in prison in gross bodies, need the fire of divine affection to quicken them. And this I understand in the language of the scripture, to be *baptized with fire*, Mat. iii. 11. when divine affection burns up all contrary principles in the soul, and brings the soul into a likeness and similitude to God. For the divine light received into the mind doth first irradiate and clear the mind from its gross and thick darkness, whereby it was unexercised and unemployed about God; and this is the first work : *mental illumination ; raising right notions of God, and things in our minds ; scattering the mists of darkness*. Yet light alone works not a change. But there must be *holy affection*. Knowledge is the *first* step to virtue : but goodness is not, but *by delight and choice*.

It is a mighty unequal and unaccountable distribution of time, for a man to lay out himself for his body ; and to neglect his mind, to feed the beast (for so the body is, in respect of the mind : it is but *the beast* that carries the soul :) and this for these reasons : because the mind is so much annoyed and disturbed by body : I speak not now of the body, as *sinning and distemper'd* : but in ordinary cases, take the body in all its advantages, 'tis an incumbrance to the mind. For when the mind raiseth itself to contemplation of immaterial things : the imagination doth suggest the management of corporeal ; which are things of an inferior nature. Bodily sense reacheth but a little way, whether by the eye, or by the ear, or any other sense. That which is
equal,

equal, just, and fit; that wherein we are most concerned, in point of goodness, wisdom, and happiness; these are all imperceptible notions to every thing of *body*. What is fit, what is just, what is equal, what is good and excellent, what is reasonable; of these no bodily sense doth judge. And yet, these are the things that we are most concern'd in, upon account of our happiness.

A mind subdued and subordinate to God, in all its actions and motions, is as the sublunary bodies here below, which are subject to the heavenly bodies above; as wax under the seal, or clay in the potter's hand. The motion is a great deal more noble and generous, because it is in a higher order, by illumination and conviction, by persuasion, and mental satisfaction, but it is not less effectual to its intent and purpose. Religion puts the soul in a right posture towards God; for we are thereby *renewed in the spirit of our minds*. The soul of man to God is as the flower of the sun; it opens at its approach, and shuts when it withdraws. Religion in the mind is as a bias upon the spirit, inclines it in all its motions; tho' sometimes it be jogged and interrupted, yet it comes to itself. It is a rule within, a law written in man's heart; it is the government of his spirit. We say men shew their spirit by their carriage, behaviour and words; and it is true. The good man is an instrument in tune: excite a good man, give him an occasion, you shall have from him savory speeches out of his mouth, and good actions in his life. Religion contains and comprehends in it all good qualities [and dispositions of mind;

mind ; it doth take in all the virtues that human nature is capable of, which are the qualifications and ornaments thereof, and which are the mind's instruments for good actions. Religion is rational, accountable, and intelligible : the difference is not more sensible between a man that is weak and strong, a man that is sick and in health, than between a man that is truly religious, and one falsely so. You may observe it, if you put them upon action. So a man that is truly religious, if you put him in motion, he will acquit and approve himself so : if he be false in his religion, you will see it by his failing and miscarriage of life.

Such is the christian religion, in respect of the nature and quality of it, all the principles of it, all the exercises and performances that it puts men upon ; it is so sovereign unto our natures, so satisfactory to the reason of our minds ; so quieting unto, and of such security against the molestations of our consciences ; so sanatory, so full for our recovery, that none who knows or doth seriously consider, would chuse to have his obligation to religion either released, cancell'd or discharged.

To conclude, how inexcusable, how unaccountable are they, who have turned the doctrine of the gospel, or *the grace of God into lasciviousness* ; (Jude 4.) and to use St. Paul's phrase, (*Rom. iii. 31.*) *have made void the law through faith*, have given such an explication of the grace of the gospel, as to set men at liberty as to morals, that is, to make void the law through faith. He represents it as the most sad miscarriage, to disoblige a man in morals, to set a
man

man at liberty as to those things that are reasonable and necessary. For the law of God's creation is no way damnified, but restored and secured by the doctrine of the gospel; yet these excuse themselves from strict morality, and conscientious living, which the better sort of heathens thought themselves obliged unto.——We prejudice ourselves miserably by mistakes. Some think that the hellish state is the *sole* product of omnipotency and sovereignty, the effect of God's power; and they think of God that he useth his creatures *as he will*; giving no account of any of his matters to principles of reason and righteousness. But certainly the ways of God are most accountable of any thing, to rules of righteousness. These are injurious apprehensions of God, and dishonourable to him, and are disclaimed by him every where in scripture; and God owns no such power, neither doth he look upon it as a *privilege*, nor doth he cloath himself with such a prerogative.

——Here is the truth of the case; *miser*y doth *a-*
rise out of ourselves; and misery and iniquity have the same foundation. Hell (for the main of it) is our guiltiness and conscience of it; so that a sinner is in a self-condemned state, without relief; and the worst of God is his just refusal of a sinner, that would not be reclaimed. These *two* are the ingredients of the hellish state; self condemnation from the guilt of a man's conscience, that is not removed by repentance; and God's refusal upon a righteous cause, because the sinner would not come within the latitude of a compassionate case.

DIS-

DISCOURSE LIV.

The absolute Necessity of Religious Obedience, and unavoidable Perdition of the Disobedient.

ROM. i. 17, 18.

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith ; as it is written, the just shall live by faith.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, that hold the truth in unrighteousness.

IN these words the apostle doth further confirm what he had declared in the foregoing verse ; where he had told us, that the *gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation.*

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed (I would have you supply it) toward them that believe, from faith to faith ; as it is written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.

These two verses contain all contraries : and contraries are the best comments one upon another. The *righteousness* of God revealed toward them that believe : the *wrath* of God revealed against all *ungodliness*. That that is opposite to the believer, is the

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the ungodly man and disobedient, and *holding truth*
in unrighteousness. So that the apostle holds him to
be an unbeliever, let him profess what he will, who
lives contrary to what he professes.

From these two verses we have these propositions.

1. That God hath *engaged* himself, resolved in
himself, and declared to man, so that he will not
go back, that all they that do believe, and obey ;
God hath engaged himself to them all for recovery,
life, and salvation, and restoration to their former
condition and happiness, to all that give themselves
up to the gospel, and live accordingly. And on the
other side, which is a perfect opposition, *the wrath*
of God is declared to all men *that hold the truth in un-*
righteousness.

2. Again, these men that do believe and obey in
the sense of the text, are *just men*, and they have
true and real righteousness; that is *evangelical right-*
eousness; and these shall have eternal life : and the
righteousness of these, through the candid construc-
tion of the gospel, and gracious interpretation of
God, is righteousness without spot or blemish : it is
so through divine candor. God accepts it so, as
loving parents accept of the good disposition of their
children, though it is little that they do. These
men in the sense of the scripture are *just* : and their
righteousness is not *rotten rags*, Is. lxiv. 6. as is said
of ritual observations in conjunction with immora-
lity ; but is true and real righteousness, without spot
or blemish. There are two degrees of innocence :
the *first* degree is never to have offended ; so *Adam*
before his fall : the *second* degree is to have repent-
ed.

ed. The former doth belong to the whiteness of snow: the last to the having our garments washed *white in the blood of the lamb*, Rev. vii. 14. Now we have not the first, but we may have the second: for then we may say, upon a moral consideration, that the sins that we have committed are as if they never were committed; when the sinner hath repented, asked God forgiveness; returned to duty, and God hath pardoned him:

On the clean contrary: God hath declared his anger and displeasure against all unbelievers and impenitent sinners; pretenders to faith, who do not in the honesty of their hearts, give themselves up to practise according to the doctrine of the gospel. They are so far from being true believers, that they offer violence to truth, and in the sense of the scripture, are really unbelievers. It is plain in the text; for *men are said to believe, as they practise*; for notwithstanding what a man hath said, we conclude he believes contrary, if he do not as he saith, and unbelievers, and disobedient, are convertibly used in several places in scripture. The way to believe to salvation, is such a faith, such a receiving the Lord *Jesus* by voluntary consent of the will, as to have regard to all his precepts, and obey them in the practice of our lives: if we do not this, we are to be reckoned among the unbelievers, and ungodly. And this for a general account of these two verses; wherein you have three oppositions which comment one upon another.

1. In contradistinction to the *righteousness of God* in the 17th verse, you have the *wrath of God* in the 18th verse.

2. To

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2. *To faith, and every one that believes ;* you have in the 18th verse *ungodly, unrighteous, and a holding truth in unrighteousness.* Wherefore the *believer*, must not be a man that is described by an act of naked and single apprehension, but such a person as in state and spirit, is separate from unrighteousness, and ungodliness ; and no way guilty of *holding truth in unrighteousness.* And then

3. Against things consequent upon the wrath of God, in the 18th verse, you have things consequent upon the goodness of God to believers.

Now for particulars. *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed, &c.*

The righteousness of God. I understand this not so as it is every where meant, or most commonly meant. But considering the opposition of the two verses, *righteousness of God* in the 17th verse, and *wrath of God* in the 18th verse, as contrary principles, producing contrary effects ; I therefore understand by the *righteousness of God* here, his goodness, his mercy, compassion, kindness, and benignity, his equal consideration, and fairness toward man, in his state of guilt. That disposition in God that moves him to forgive, to pity and compassionate man in his misery, and in his ruined estate. This I understand by *God's righteousness* here : and so it is best distinguished from the *wrath of God* in the 18th verse, by which I understand God's displeasure upon offence : and this concurs with that of the apostle, *Rom. xi. 22. Behold therefore the goodness and the severity of God.* The *goodness* of God toward all those that repent and believe ; the *severity* of God

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God toward those that are contumacious and impenitent. It is so understood in some other scriptures; *Dan. ix. 7, 9. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but to us confusion of faces. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him.* So in the *Rom. iii. 25. to declare his righteousness for remission of sins through the forbearance of God.* If you will take righteousness as strict justice, it is but a small principle for remission of sins: but you must take it for God's goodness, kindness, and benignity. Such is the tenour of the gospel, that through *Jesus Christ*, there is declared in the way of faith and obedience, that God is very willing of his goodness, clemency, and benignity to pardon sin to all such as repent, believe, and obey.

From faith to faith. That is in its several degrees, from one measure of faith to another; that is, from faith as a grain of mustard seed, to faith as a mountain: as the psalmist in *Psal. lxxxiv. 7. They go from strength to strength.*

As it is written, the just shall live by faith. These words you have four times in the bible; and we have them in two different senses, consistent, but different. We find it originally, *Hab. ii. 4.* And you have it here in the text, and you have it, *Gal. iii. 11.* And you have it, *Heb. x. 38.* In the words you have three things.

1. A man is evangelically righteous, in the way of faith and obedience, notwithstanding imperfections. Faith in the Lord Jesus, pursued by obedience, doth amount to real righteousness; and through the
grace

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grace of God in *Jesus Christ*; they are accepted of
God as such. *Repentance from dead works, and faith*
in the Lord Jesus, is the tenour of the gospel-cove-
nant; the honest and sincere endeavours of those
that do believe; and embrace the gospel, are in scrip-
ture called *righteousness, without spot or wrinkle*, Eph.
v. 27. And this is also the *fine linen* clean and white
which the saints wear, *Rev. xix. 8*. There must be
sincere obedience, although short and imperfect,
which is accepted as full and perfect, in and through
Christ. This I take to be the true explication of
imputed righteousness, that God accepts of the sincere
obedience of his creatures; though it be short and
imperfect, yet if it be sincere, in and through Christ;
it is accepted, as if full and perfect.

2. Such as I have now described; they shall *live*
in the sense of the evangelist: they *shall not perish,*
but have everlasting life, John iii. 16. He that is
righteous, according to the doctrine of the gospel,
though imperfect and short, if you consider him ac-
cording to the doctrine of the law; yet if he be a
true penitent, holds the head, goes to God in and
through Christ, and endeavours to be in the world
as Christ was in the world; such a man is in the
way of eternal life, and shall be eternally saved.

3. Such persons as these that have faith and con-
fidence in God; and live in expectation from him
and dependence upon him, they are *not in haste*, but
will stay God's leisure. They wait upon God for
the fulfilling of his promises, and willingly stay
God's time, though not in present possession, they
stay themselves upon him.

The

The two former propositions are the sense, as the words are quoted, *Rom. i. 17. Gal. iii. 11.* The third as the words are, *Hab. ii. 4. Heb. x. 38.*

Further I observe from these words, *the just shall live by faith*, being four times in the scripture,

First, That men that have been inspired, have thought it worthy of themselves to *prove by scripture.* Our apostle, whom we look upon to be an extraordinary person, yet he proves what he saith by scripture, *as it is written.* Men inspired prove by scripture,

1. To declare the endiſter, ſpeaker, writer, to be but the *instrument*, the inspirer, the *author*.

2. To ſhew the *unity* of the ſpirit : the ſame ſpirit ſpake by *Moses*, and the prophets, and the apoſtles.

3. To ſhew the conſiſtency of the ſame ſpirit with *himself* : the ſame truth for ſubſtance in ſeveral times.

4. To ſecure us againſt *impoſture* ; and to warrant us to examine what is ſaid in God's name, or under pretence of his commiſſion, to do as the *Bereans* did, *Acts xvii. 11.* A ſure word of prophecy, *2 Pet. i. 19.* Our faith is our peculiar reſerve for God : God will not expoſe it to any invincible temptation. There is in the goſpel only *one great matter of faith*, which God propoſes to us to believe ; the grace of God in Chriſt, pardon of ſin in his blood, acceptance through him, going to God by him, *Gal. i. 8.* 'Tis weakneſs to be credulous, *Prov. xiv. 15.*

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5. To cast honour upon scripture. It speaks its authority, and sufficiency. 2 *Pet.* i. 21. *Spake as moved by the Holy Ghost.* 2 *Tim.* iii. 16, 17. *Scripture is given, to make perfect, and thoroughly to furnish.*

6. To teach us the way of understanding scripture, and improving it to the full.

Therefore, if any now a-days should rise up among us, under the best colour, the best pretence, and declare any thing in the name of God, which he cannot give an account of by reason, or by scripture, we have authority enough to refuse it. Of all things under heaven it doth not become a christian to be credulous, or light of faith. Who can pretend to speak to you, as *St. Paul* did? And yet he did think it did become him, to prove out of the ancient prophets. Let us not compromise, let us not be credulous; but let every man see that they that do dictate, or propose any thing of religion or conscience, that they give very good assurance; since *St. Paul* in declaring, doth prove, as it is written. That is my observation. It is the greatest impotency to be credulous. Let us lay aside credulity, and slight believing.

Secondly, That men that have been inspired, have taken liberty to quote scripture in a very great latitude, *Heb.* xiii. 5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* The apostle makes it a general promise to all persons, when it was a particular promise to *Joshua*, when he was substituted in the place of *Moses*, *Josh.*

i. 5. and we say, we must not conclude a general from a particular : so, *Heb. i. 5. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son, 2 Sam. vii. 14. So, Mat. xxvi. 31. I will smite the shepherd,* from *Zach. xiii. 7.* So *Mat. viii. 17.* being an interpretation of *Isa. liii. 4. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.* The evangelist applies it to his compassionating the sick and weak ; which is not the fulness of the prophecy. So *Mat. ii. 15.* the evangelist proves Christ was to come out of Egypt, from *Hos. xi. 1. When Israel was a child, I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.* So again, *Heb. ii. 13. Behold I, and the children which God hath given me ;* that is, Christ and believers, Christ and christians ; quoted from *Isa. viii. 18.* which doth particularly refer to that prophet. *Behold I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel.* So, *Acts ii. 31. He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption ;* from *Psal. xvi. 10.* where the words refer to David. So, *John xiii. 18. I speak not of you all ; I know whom I have chosen : but that the scripture may be fulfilled : he that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me,* taken from *Psal. xli. 9. Judas and Achitophel.* So, *John xix. 36.* it is said the soldiers did not break a bone of our Saviour : as it is written, *a bone of him shall not be broken.* It is nowhere written of Christ, but only of a type ; it is said of the paschal lamb, *Ex. xii. 46.* and *Numb. ix. 12. Neither shall ye break a bone thereof.*

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An account of this in seven particulars.

1. There is either the *like notion* : or,
2. A *parity of reason* : or,
3. A *proportion of time* ; that in our time, that holds a proportion to something in former time : or,
4. There is the relation of *type* and *antitype*, most of the things in the old testament were types of Christ, or something belonging to him ; so that that which is true of the type, is true of the antitype : or,
5. By way of *allusion* and accommodation, and no proof at all : so that place, *their sound is gone out through all the earth*, Psal. xix. 4. meaning the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon and stars : and St. Paul brings it, as proving that the gospel was made known to mankind, Rom. xi. 18. or,
6. The scripture doth *own scripture-phrases*, and takes delight to use it : or,
7. There is the *increase* of the sense. For propheticall scripture is often fulfilled, sometimes in one sense, sometimes in another.

By these seven you may give account of that great liberty and *latitude* holy men have taken, when they have applied the old testament to the new.

To make some use of this, that the scripture of the new testament quotes the scripture of the old testament, with a very great latitude:

1. Though the credit and truth of scripture is discharged by one sense, yet we may otherwise use scripture, if the words may also well bear it : we may otherwise use scripture, than in the sense mainly

ly and primarily intended in the place whence we fetch it, if the sense be consistent with it. So doth the apostle here in this quotation, *the just shall live by faith*, &c.

2. I superadd, that it becomes persons who do not pretend to an extraordinary inspiration, to understand and interpret scripture, no otherwise than the context leads to : and that for this reason. If you give leave, and listen to persons that now pretend to a private spirit of interpreting, and who do not give us assurance that their interpretation is warranted by the context ; we set wanton wit at liberty, to bring in any fancy whatsoever, and lay a foundation for all manner of imaginary conceit ; and so frustrate and enervate scripture, as a rule of faith. If you let go scripture in the sense to which the context leads, and if you let go the true and impartial proposals, and dictates of sober reason ; then do we open the door to all manner of delusion and imposture, and shall be carried we do not know whither. Let us stand by these two ; for these are the two certain principles. If we lay these aside, we do not know where we shall be carried, unless we fall into the hands of truly divinely inspired men.

Now to fall upon the 18th verse. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, that hold the truth in unrighteousness.*

The wrath of God. Not that there is any such thing in God as passion that doth disturb or discompose him, as our passions do us ; who are sometimes

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transported by them, and put from our reason ; as is well observed of any man. A man in passion, the eye of his mind is clouded ; and no man that is wise will trust himself, if once moved, or affected. But you must understand, when these things are attributed to God, it is by way of accommodation to us ; and you are to understand the effect, not the affect : such effects as proceed from displeasure, they are used only to convey and carry notions of things to our apprehensions.

Revealed from heaven. That is just as the phrase is, 1 Cor. xv. 47. There are five things intimated in this form of words.

1. That the *guise*, mode, usage, fashion, custom of the world, are not supreme, not sovereign, so as nothing above them. These things that men so greatly dote upon, guise, mode, fashion, usage, custom ; we must bring these to the touch-stone.

2. *Revealed from heaven.* It gives us this intimation ; that God doth *superintend* over our carriages and behaviours, and looks upon himself as concerned in our circumstances and transactions. The atheist and irreligious are aggrieved hereat, and do question this, and would fain set their hearts at rest about it, and disbelieve it. But those that are the observers of God, and have expectation from God, do believe this to be true, and rejoice in it.

3. *Revealed from heaven.* It intimates, that wickedness is of so odious a nature, so clamorous in itself, and so provoking, that the noise and cry of it ascends to heaven, and causes God, as it were, to look down. Other scriptures declare as much, Gen. xviii,

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20, 21. *And the Lord said, because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous ; I will go down. And Jam. v. 4. Behold the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth : and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath.*

4. The fourth intimation is, the *certainty of punishment* ; for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven. If the powers of this world should unite, if the wits of politicians should contrive, and the force of gold and bribery should be used ; there is no sheltring of sinners from the God of heaven, to whom all things lie open ; no finding a way to escape, *Rev. vi. 16.* If authority here below neglect to punish sin, we cannot be sure God will not. If a malefactor make an escape through power, or favour, or any art or trick, God's judgment is supervenient. This intimates *certainty* ; because God appears from heaven.

5. Here is the *justice of punishment* in two particulars. 1. Because it will be done *openly*. God will do what he doth openly, *revealed from heaven*, in the view of all, *Psal. xcvi. 2. The Lord hath made known his salvation ; his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.* And it is said, at the last day, *God will judge the world in righteousness* ; when all shall be raised at the sound of the trumpet. 2. Done in a due *measure* and proportion : it shall not exceed the demerit of the fact. And this we are assured of, because it is from heaven ; and heaven is God's throne, and is a throne of righteousness,

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ness, *Psal. xcvi. 2. Against all ungodliness and un-*
righteousness of men. You have two words here. *Un-*
godliness, which lies in profaneness in the wor-
ship of God, in flying into the face of God himself ;
that is properly impiety. Then *unrighteousness* ; in
strictness it lies in variation from the rule of right,
in our transactions with men. Unrighteousness is
injury against a man's neighbour. Or else the su-
peradding unrighteousness to ungodliness doth inti-
mate, that whosoever is ungodly is unrighteous be-
tween God and himself ; for our devotion to God,
is as much his due, as any thing is our due in the
world. Or *lastly*, these two, ungodliness and un-
righteousness do comprehend the whole species of
evil.

Who hold the truth in unrighteousness. This is the
great iniquity of us mortals, upon the account of
which we are self-condemned, yea lost to eternity,
this *holding truth in unrighteousness.*

The *truth of God* it admits of many distinctions ;
but I would only speak of truth by way of eman-
ation. There is in divinity, a *distinction of truth* that
is of main and principal concernment ; that is, the
distinction of truth in respect of its *emanation* from
God, the father of truth ; for all truth is a ray, and
a beam from God, who is the father of truth. Now
God communicates himself to us two ways.

1. In the moment of the creation ; and that we
call *truth of the first inscription*, or the light of God's
creation, or the principle of natural conscience, the
true issue of reason. For whatever men say, they
who take away reason in things of religion, take a-

way

way the ground upon which God will examine the nations, at the day of judgment. For God doth not call any one to an account for that talent he never gave. So that if none were to give an account at the last day, but those to whom the bible is known, it would not be the twentieth part of the world. Now by this principle of God's creation, man is obliged to all things that are substantially good : all things that are immutable and unalterable are founded upon this principle : therefore the report of our faculties, which God made true (and it is impossible a monster should come out of God's hands) is true ; as sure as God made them true, so sure they are true. The proper result of a faculty is true, as it is true that the sun is light. This therefore is the *truth of the first inscription*, what the reason of a man's mind doth determine : and whosoever goes against the reason of his mind, is self-condemned, destroys conscience, and he roots out (so far as he can) every thing of God in his soul. And upon this is founded all the great things in religion and conscience, all the things that sanctify a man, and make him capable of being happy.

2. The second emanation of truth, is the truth *of after-revelation*. For such is the great goodness of God, that having fallen, he doth reveal to him upon what terms he will receive and pardon sinners. It was *probable*, that God would pardon sin to those that did repent, leave off to sin, and return to duty : but by revealed truth, we have *assurance* of this : and *this is the light of the day-spring from on high, visiting us*, Luke i. 78.

By

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By the *former* of these, we come to the knowledge of piety toward God, justice toward man, and sobriety to ourselves. By the *latter*, we come to know in what way we that have been apostates, shall be accepted. So that the first hath a deeper foundation, than that God gave us a law engraven in stone, or that we have the ten commandments in the bible. God did *make* man first to these things; for the very dictates of natural conscience, God did interweave them into the very principles of our frame and constitution. No man is impious against God, or unrighteous toward his neighbour (unless he have contracted a reprobacy of sense) and no man is excessive, as to himself, but he hath an internal reprovcr. A man is departed from himself, if he be disobedient in any of these great instances of morality. If man had continued right and straight, he would never have needed a law without him; because he would have been a law to himself; but since we have degenerated, and apostatized, since we have contracted guilt, the divine goodness hath been pleased to awaken us, and call us to advertency and consideration, by a law without us: and that was first by the ten commandments engraven upon tables of stone, and now written in the bible; which law was a copy of the law written in man's heart before he became a sinner. For had there not been a law written in the heart of man, a law without, would have done very little. No man can prove any thing to him that grants nothing: and he that knows nothing, grants nothing: whosoever finds not within himself a principle suitable

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able to the moral law, whence of choice he doth comply with it, he is departed from himself, and has lost the natural perfections of his being. So you see what was vital and principal in the first state, and what was for recovery. So now in the gospel-state, you have the *law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, and that corresponds with the *law written in man's heart*: and then you have the law written in the new testament, and that holds a proportion to the law written in the tables of stone. And as the law written upon the tables of stone was in respect of the law of the creation written upon man's heart; so in the gospel-state, there is the principle of regeneration, and for the advantage of *that* you have what is written in the new testament. So you have it in *Heb. viii. 10.* quoted from *Jer. xxxi. 33.* these distinctions are very necessary for you to understand: you have truth of natural light, and truth revealed in holy scripture.

Now to hold *truth in unrighteousness*. This is a *Hebraism: in injustitia pro injuste*, that is, unjustly to detain. For it is but justice, to give a man's self up to the obedience of truth; and truth loves to break forth, and shew it self; and it is to be imagined, according as men know, so they are, and so they do. God hath an action of false imprisonment, in the behalf of his truth, against every man that doth not obey and fulfil the truth that he knows.

Now this puts us upon a double and necessary duty, and no man can be a good man, that fails in these two.

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1. It lies upon us to *awaken* ourselves to the knowledge God hath made us to, by serious consideration, impartial self-examination, and free communication one with another. He is not a modest man, that thinks himself wise enough to find out truth, and judge of it without submitting it to other mens thoughts. This is the first, that a man awaken himself to the knowledge God hath made him to : that is, to know the great difference between good and evil, upon a moral consideration. And to acquaint himself with this, he ought seriously to consider, impartially to examine, and freely to communicate. Whosoever fails in these, can never come at the truth. The

2. Duty, is to comply with such knowledge, and to fulfil it ; that is, neither down-right contradicting it, as the atheists doth, and the profane ; so to destroy and avoid it, by contrary custom and practice, more violent at first, but after facilitated by use : nor to abate it, by using colours, and partial distinctions, to evade it, and elude it, as men are apt to do.

But to give it you in several particulars. In five instances there is *holding truth in unrighteousness*.

1. Where there is knowledge that doth not go forth into *act* : for a man may be no better than a devil, by knowledge barely.

2. Where we do not attain a due *growth* : for where there is a principle, there will be *growth* ; unless there be violence, or some evil accident.

3. When men *elude* their judgments, by a put-off, a shift, or an evasion ; as when the drunken man calls it only good-fellowship ; or he that is conceited

conceited and turbulent in religion, calls himself zealous for truth:

4. When we do not follow truth fully, but as Herod did many things, according to St. John's doctrine; but he did not do all.

5. That high degree of sin, going against a man's own knowledge and judgment, so as to contract reprobacy of mind, seariness of conscience, hardness of heart; which is the desperate way of sinning, either here, or in hell.

DISCOURSE LV.

The absolute Necessity of Religious Obedience, and unavoidable Perdition of the Disobedient.

ROM. i. 18:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, that hold the truth in unrighteousness.

HAVING made explication of the several phrases in the text, I proceed now to the declaration of this great and horrid *sin*, which gives God that high offence, alienates us from him, exposes us to his displeasure, and against which he doth thus declare; this *holding truth in unrighteousness*; which admits of several degrees.

I. *When*

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1. *When knowledge doth not go forth into act; where it doth but attain the effect of goodness: for bare knowledge doth not sanctify; no man is renewed by his knowledge only. The impure sect of the Gnosticks denominated themselves from knowledge. A man may be no better than the devil by knowledge barely; it is said of the degenerate spirits, the devils, that they know and tremble. The effect is fear and astonishment, because there is not the product of goodness.*

2. *Where there is not attaining due growth; for there will be growth, when there is a principle, if there is not violence or some ill accident: where nature begins, it goes in towards perfection; and it is in a state of increase, 'till it come to the state of consistency, till it come to perfection, either in bulk or maturity. Growth in bulk or maturity, as in nature, so in grace, 2 Pet. iii. 18. The apostle tells us of the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, Eph. iv. 13. We may distinguish indeed between christians newly born, and christians in their full strength; but it doth not become a christian to be still as much in the dark, as he was at first. There is wrong done to truth, if it stay long in the place of breaking forth.*

3. *When men elude their judgments, by a put-off, a shift, an evasion, unsound distinction, pretending to difference, where there is none. Thus David deceived himself in the case of Uriah, 2 Sam. xi. 14. He thought he could draw out whom he pleased in a forlorn, and so have them to be destroyed; for so it is said, thou hast killed Uriah with the sword of the*
Amorites,

and unavoidable perdition of the disobedient. 127

Amorites, 2 Sam. xii. 9. A like instance was that of *Ananias and Sapphira*, who might upon second thoughts think that part was a good sacrifice, *Acts* v. And then *Saul*, he saves the best of the cattle to sacrifice to the Lord, 1 Sam. xv. 15. Upon this account we may charge the *Pharisees*; *Moses* said, *honour thy father, and thy mother, and whosoever curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, if a man shall say to his father or mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, he shall go free*, Mark vii. 10, 11. Here was doing that under one notion, which a man's own judgment will not let him do under another, when the case is much the same. Thus when things are under a disguise, when that that is within the species of *intemperance* is called *good-fellowship*: or when any man is *conceited*, or of a *turbulent spirit in religion*, for him to please himself with a notion of *zeal for truth*: whereas reason and nature should always be consulted, and the ear always open to better information. We should be very careful and exact to observe the difference of moral good and evil; we should not think we have already attained, but may live to learn. This point chiefly concerns things that are in their own nature good and convenient, or else evil and hurtful. And here for a man to use subtlety, is greatly to abuse himself, and to make himself obnoxious to God. For in the great instances of morality, herein we should be severe and impartial, not giving ourselves leave to comply with our own humour: for, as to the great notices of reason and nature, the measures of virtue and

and vice, the grand instances of morality, there can be no allowance, no variation, because they are matters fixt, unalterable, unchangeable, indispensable. Every man is obliged to live piously towards God; to use justice between man and man; and sobriety and temperance as to himself. Moral precepts never vary; in these great matters of righteousness, no variation or alteration: but in institutes and positive laws, there may be a latitude, since these are for the good and security of the former; and in ceremonies, God himself hath given allowance; as in the case of circumcision in the wilderness, omitted for forty years together, *Josh. v. 2*, &c. and in the case of the shew-bread, which *David* and his men eat when they were an hungry, *1 Sam. xxi*. And the reason is, because morals are *laws of themselves*, and the necessity of them arises from the things themselves, without sanction *by will*, but by the reason of the thing: but for positives, it is enough for them, that they are for a season. In the great matters of righteousness there is no variation, but in *positives* and *institutes* there is a latitude of sense, interpretation, time and observance. Institutes were never intended to be in compensation or recompence for failure in *morals*, but for subservience and for *their* better security; and when they have been used in way of compensation and commutation for morals, they have been spoken of contemptuously, and as if God's stamp were not upon them; as in *Isa. i. 10*, — *15. chap. lxvi. 3*.

4. We may be said to *hold the truth in unrighteousness*, when we do *not follow truth fully*; as *Herod*,
(Mark

(Mark vi. 20.) *did many things* according to St. John's doctrine; but he did not do all. Our Saviour doth mightily accuse the *Pharisees*, because they did pick and choose, singling out *one* precept, and in the observance of *that*, being exact; and this, to make a compensation for *the rest*: zealous in *one* thing, loose in *others*; they are charged therefore with hypocrisy. Not following truth fully, is, when all worldly things do not vail to religion, but worldly conveniencies are unduly considered; for truth is so noble and generous a thing, that it will not submit to a compromise with its opposite; we should abide by the certain, tho' it prove costly.

5. *The high degree of sin*; to go against a man's own judgment and conscience; by violent and unnatural practice, to contract reprobacy of mind, searedness of conscience, hardness of heart. It is not God that makes men hard, but so it comes to pass upon their sinning, when men pursue their knowledge by unanswerable practice. This men will do, when lust is strong and high. Persons of unsubdu'd and unmortified affections, they are exposed to such horrid and unnatural use of themselves, and so come to be prodigiously wicked. For no man is suddenly most desperately wicked. It is hard for any one at first to do flatly and downright evil; but no man, when he doth begin, knows how far he shall go: for the breaking in of sin is as the inundation of water. It is an easy matter to preserve a man's innocency at first; but if a man have done a base and a disingenuous act, no man knows what he will come to at last.

This for an account by way of explication. I will now give you some scriptures that carry the notion; and then make some observations, *Luke xi. 33. A candle under a bushel.* A candle is for light, not only for him that sets it up, but for the whole room. *A candle under a bushel*; that is, knowledge confined; it doth not appear in practice. Another is, *Matt. xxv. 8. lamps that are soon out,* they had light; but it was not light that did continue to be of use to the last. Another is, *verse 25. a talent hid in the earth*; there it cannot increase; it must be employed. Another expression is, *Luke xix. 20. a pound laid up in a napkin*: no increase upon it: no body the better for it. *St. James calls these men bearers; and not doers of the word of God, James i. 22.* These are some of those scriptures that carry the notion of *holding truth in unrighteousness.*

I will now make two observations.

1. Discover how wrong and injurious apprehensions men have of God.

2. I will make it appear, that all ungodly and unrighteous men are first *self-condemned*; for every one that in scripture-sense is a *sinner*, is *self-condemned*.

1st, The wrong and injurious apprehensions that men have of God, that sinners have no warning, that they are surprised by God's judgments, and taken unawares. This is without all ground, since *the wrath of God is declared by his word and by his works*; besides the sense of mens minds, the guilt of their consciences, and their own heart misgiving them; for no man is true to himself, if he be ill-employed:

employed : for he that is employed in an evil work, is always possessed with fear, and he is not certain that he shall be true to himself. Therefore this is untrue even of those that have been suddenly smitten. This scripture that is before us, is remarkable both for the state of life and death, wherein the way of the one and the other is declared. So that when I read the 17th verse, I wonder that any one that lives within the pale of the visible church, and takes the bible into his hand, and once looks upon this text ; that he is not, not only almost, but altogether persuaded to become a christian. Here is such an invitation, so full satisfaction, that the kindness of God is declared from heaven toward all that believe. Though we have been finners, though fallen creatures, and are become miserable ; yet if we have repentance from dead works, and faith in our Lord Jesus, through the mercy of God we are set straight again, and shall pass with God for righteous, and shall come to salvation. If this will not do, I do not know what will do more. But when I read the 18th verse, I am as much amazed at the wickedness, and profaneness of the world. For will any one's heart serve him to stand upon terms of open defiance against God ? to contest with him, and venture to run the hazard to go on in such a way that God hath so openly declared against ? It is a declaration from the Majesty of heaven, against all the profaneness of the wicked and degenerate world. *Isa. xxvii. 4. Who would set briars and thorns against me in battle ? I will go through them, and burn them together.*

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So that it is strange any should say God is wanting to men, either in warning, declaring or shewing them what will be the effect of all their unrighteousness. Now this wonder of mine doth increase upon this consideration, when I think what effects have been upon the reading of some other scriptures in former times. St. *Augustine* converted from *Manicheism* and a loose life, by reading *Rom. xiii. 12, 13. Origin*, after he had been brought to give some undue compliance with the heathen idolatry, was exceedingly affected with the thought of what he had done, and brought off by thinking of *Psalms l. 16, 17*. Also the famous conversion of an obstinate Jew, *Eman. Tremellius*, who afterwards proved a very useful instrument in the church of God, was by looking into this book. But now hath this great instrument of God in the world, for the business of religion, and conversion of sinners, lost its virtue and efficacy in those latter times? Nothing can be expressed in words to encourage to faith and obedience, more than the 17th verse; nothing more to persuade men to walk up to their light, than what is in the 18th verse. Wherefore, if this be so, let the declaration of God in scripture be acknowledged as true; *thy destruction is of thyself*, *Hos. xiii. 9. Why will ye die, O ye sinners?* *Ez. xviii. 31*. And God will make it true, that *he would not the death of a sinner*, chap. xxxiii. 11. And he may challenge all the world, *are not my ways equal?* chap. xviii. 29. Shew yourselves like men; use your rational faculties, and judge between me and my vineyard. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true are all thy judgments,*

and unavoidable perdition of the disobedient. 133
ments, Psal. xix 9. and cxix. 137. It is not that
God doth not fairly begin with men, that that is not
done that might be done, if they were not wilful
and self-neglective. It is not that God is not ready
to go on with men that answer to his call, to carry
them on further : for we may resolve, that if God
of his own goodness awaken us, and begin with us,
if we answer that call, God will go on further ; for
no man perishes thro' a failure on God's part, but
thro' obstinacy or neglect on his own part. God of
his great goodness and compassion to men, doth gra-
ciously begin with his creatures ; but he often finds
them wilful, obstinate and rebellious. God is rea-
dy to pursue his good beginning ; and, if they an-
swer his call, further to carry them on : for you have
an expresse promise, *to him that hath, shall be given,*
Mat. xiii. 12. All grace is help, and where God is,
there is strength. Therefore cannot any one say,
his miscarriage is of God ; it is not want on God's
part, but failure on ours. It is not that God fails
in what is becoming him, in the relation he stands
to us as creatures, as first and chief cause ; but we
are wanting to ourselves. What is all the misery
that befalls sinners, in their most forlorn condition,
but the fruit of their own sins ? Not any thing that
proceeds from God's arbitrary will and power ; but
they contract guiltiness of conscience, impenitence
of mind, hardness of heart, and an incapacity to act
God-ward, or to receive from God. *Solomon* hath
stated the case well in *Prov. i. 24.* *I have called,*
and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no
man regarded ; ——— ye have set at nought all my

134 *The absolute necessity of religious obedience, counsel, and would none of my reproof.* This speaks to the case of those that continue in a state of sin, and refuse God's endeavours to reclaim them, and bring them to good. And then concerning *apostates*, the case is declared most plainly, in *Pro. xiv. 14.* *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways*; not any thing that proceeds from God's will or power, but the fruit of their own ways. The former speaks of sinners all along from the beginning; the latter of apostates from a good beginning. We are highly concerned to have right apprehensions of God: and it is injurious to God, and most causeless, to attribute our coming short of salvation to God's failure; for you see here is a proposal, and terms that are just and fit. For 'tis reasonable, if we have done amiss, that we repent, deprecate God, and importune him for favour. And it is also possible; for wherever God begins, we are able with him to do something, notwithstanding our contracted weakness; for where God is, there is strength. And then it is good for us; for repentance is sovereign to our natures, satisfactory to our minds, and quieting to our consciences. And lastly, it makes us capable of happiness; for we cannot be happy till reconciled to God, and we cannot be reconciled to God while in a state of sin and evil. So that the declaration is full in the 17th verse; and then for the 18th verse, if men do not come up to practise what they know, they are self-condemned. But this is the

2. Second *observation*, the scripture doth suppose that ungodly, and unrighteous men are *self-condemned*;
ed;

and unavoidable perdition of the disobedient. 135

ed ; against ungodly and unrighteous men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. I look upon these words, as rendering an account, not making a distinction ; as rendering an account how it comes to pass, notwithstanding all God's endeavours and declarations, that men continue ungodly persons. The reason is, *because they offer violence to truth, go contrary to their light, and neglect the declarations of God :* for these words, *holding the truth in unrighteousness,* are superadded as causal, not as distinctive ; not as if it distinguished between *ungodly* and *unrighteous* persons, as giving an account ; not distinguishing persons, as if some did, some did not.——Now, because this is a great point, I will undertake to give you a just account of it. I say, all that in any scripture are branded for *sinners*, they are men that sin against their knowledge, imprison the truth of God, and hold it in unrighteousness. I call these sinners that the scripture doth. I find in the language of scripture, none are nominated sinners, but such as *now* we are representing. The scripture doth never fasten the title or denomination upon them that mean well, but are in something mistaken ; who now and then are under an error, having failings, imperfections, and shortnesses ; that do now and then miscarry upon a violent temptation or sudden surprisal. You never find these men are called *sinners* ; neither are the infirmities of the regenerate, the sincere and upright-hearted called *sins*, such as these sudden incursions and abreptions, when their thoughts are snatched away from them, either in praying or hearing. Sudden surprisals, first motions
of

136 *The absolute necessity of religious obedience,*
of passion, sins of ignorance, mistakes in judgment,
misapprehensions, irregularities of the first motions,
miscarriages upon violent assaults, and upon the im-
portunity of temptation, and when men are in a
great fear, and out of themselves for a while. These
things do befall the best of us at times: but after a
while we recover ourselves, and then ask God for-
giveness, and make use of faith for expiation in
Christ's blood; we pray God for grace to recover
us, and for more strength for the time to come.
These are sins that require God's forgiveness, and
are a true cause for us to be humble, and modest,
and to depend upon God; but they do not break
our peace with God, neither do they havock con-
science, or denominate a man a *sinner*. But I shall
tell you what the denomination of a *sinner* is in
scripture. The first in scripture called *sinners* were
the *Sodomites*, Gen. xiii. 13. *But the men of Sodom*
were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.
They were guilty of the sin not fit to be named in
the ears of a christian congregation. In the next
place: we hear not of any called *sinners*, till we
come to hear of the rebellion against God, the con-
spiracy of *Corah, Dathan and Abiram, sinners against*
their own souls, Numb. xvi. 38. The next is the *A-*
malekites, persons that had given God such an of-
fence, that he had concluded to root them out of
the earth, 1 Sam. xv. 18. The next place where
you have the state of wickedness described, is *Psal.*
i. 1. a state perfectly opposite to a good man. Then
come to the *new testament* and there you find *pub-*
licans and *sinners*, persons that were thought not fit
for

and unavoidable perdition of the disobedient. 137

for any man to be secula in their company, *Mat. ix. 10.* And *Mat. xxvi. 45.* *The son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.* Such as *Judas*, such as *Pilate*, such as the high priests, and those that sworned false witnesses. Remarkable is that place, *Luke xiii. 12.* *Then were present at that season, some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.* And *Jesus* answering, said unto them, *Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay.* They did imagine they were extraordinary wicked persons, because they suffered such judgments. So *Jahn ix. 31.* *It was the blind man's notion, God heareth not sinners.* Then see what kind of persons are put in conjunction with sinners, *1 Tim. i. 9.* *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient; for the ungodly and for sinners; for the unholy, and profane; for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers; for manslayers, for whoremongers; for them that defile themselves with mankind; for men-stealers; for liars; for perjured persons.* Such persons as these in scripture are branded for sinners, the 15th verse of the epistle of *Jude.* *The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*

Now here is my observation, that these persons that are branded for sinners, did hold the truth in unrighteousness: they did wilfully sin against their light, against

138 *The absolute necessity of religious obedience,*
against their knowledge. Now it will do well to observe this distinction that scripture makes, and to distinguish the failings of the regenerate, from sin in this sense : for sinners, in the sense of scripture, are such as are highly exorbitant, that make havock of conscience, and are of profligate lives. Now the scripture tells us, that *he that is born of God, doth not commit sin*, 1 John iii. 9. that is, not in this sense, doth not live in sin, doth not voluntarily consent to known iniquity, no one that is regenerate doth pass into the contrary nature. It is unnatural for any one in the state of regeneration, to be a sinner in the sense I have now expressed : they may have shortnesses, failings, imperfections, err, mistake, may be now and then surpris'd ; but voluntarily to consent to known iniquity, make havock of conscience, or wilfully to controul the settled laws of heaven, the eternal laws of righteousness, goodness, and truth, of piety to God, justice to men, and sobriety to ourselves ; this is unnatural, they do not this. If I were to speak to sinners in the scripture sense, there is no consolation to be given at all ; but only directions to repent and ask God forgiveness, and to begin a-new, reinforce your first conversion, if ever you were converted ; if not, now begin. But now if men wrong themselves, then we are at a loss, and know not what to say to them. For if they have been subject only to infirmities, that their human nature lays them open to, have been sometimes surpris'd, have sometimes fail'd ; if that be their case, then we say, great is the grace of the gospel, and all its promises are applicable, there is pardon
for

for them all, in and thro' Christ : and the grace of the gospel is enough to give all these men satisfaction. If men be sinners, have a deep sense of their imperfections and infirmities, failings that are involuntary in some measure, we have then warrant to apply God's promises. But if they be sinners in language of scripture, then nothing to say, but either you never were yet serious, or in a state of regeneration ; or else if you did begin, you must begin again, and deprecate God's displeasure, and repent, *if perhaps the thoughts of thy wicked heart may be forgiven thee.* In this case having suffered shipwreck of faith and a good conscience ; you must make use of the plank of repentance, to come safe to the shore again. These persons have the guilt of evil practice lying upon their minds ; they have their own internal sense reproving them, challenging them, condemning them. For the cause of all creatures misery is *rational* and *accountable* ; and men do dishonour God and misrepresent him, when they say, that any creature falls into misery *by the use of God's sovereignty* ; it doth really arise *from within us* : and there is no danger in respect of God, (notwithstanding his great priviledge,) if men be innocent and not self-condemned. — Misery and harm do not proceed from *abroad*, but do arise from *within*. If omnipotence itself should load me with all burdens, if I am innocent within, I shall be able to bear it ; but if I am guilty, I have a wound *within*, and have nothing within me true to myself. — All misery arises out of ourselves. It is a most gross mistake ; and men are of dull and stupid spirits, who

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who think that that state which we call hell is an in-
commodious place only; and that God by his sovereignty
throws men therein: for hell arises out of a
man's self; and hell's fuel is the guilt of a man's
conscience. And it is impossible that any should be
so miserable as hell makes a man, and as there a man
is miserable; but by his own condemning himself;
and on the other side, when they think that heaven
arises from any place, or any nearness to God or an-
gels; this is not principally so: but it lies in a re-
fined temper, in an internal reconciliation to the nature
of God, and to the rule of righteousness. So that both
hell and heaven have their foundation within men.

DISCOURSE LVI.

*The absolute Necessity of Religious O-
bedience, and unavoidable Perdition
of the Disobedient.*

ROM. i. 18.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against
all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, that hold
the truth in unrighteousness.*

YET once more, and then I have done: for this
scripture is very remarkable; the former verse
telling us the way of life and salvation; and
this telling us what we must trust to, what we shall
at last find, if we neglect God and his declaration,

if

if we do not make use of the assistance of grace, and the divine spirit.

The point that I have insisted upon is, that those that are, in a scripture sense, *sinners*, in the language of the text, *ungodly* and *unrighteous* persons, do *hold the truth in unrighteousness*, and are self-condemned. These kind of persons are under a double condemnation; 1. the guilt of evil practice lying upon their minds; 2. their own internal *sense* reproving them, challenging them, condemning them. They are condemned of themselves, before they are condemned of God. Evil knowingly admitted is our burden; for all evil is forcible, violent, and unnatural; and whosoever is a sinner, in the language of scripture, is one that wrongs his own principles. — This I can make appear in respect of those three famous instances of evil; *impiety toward God*; *unrighteousness toward others*, or else against a *man's self*, by contradicting the reason of the mind, or subordinating the reason of the mind to bodily sense.

1st. *In respect of God.* For, consider him as the father of our beings, and that we are derivatively from him; or that our state is dependency; or that we are sinful; or that we are under his love, or that he is to be our judge; all these will cause acts of piety. If we do answer our relation to God; then it will be reverence, obedience, and faith in its full latitude, to wit, faith of affiance, adherence, observance: this is the first, and is founded deeply in reason, and in the relation we stand in to God, as father of our spirits, and original of our being. Or if we consider our own state in relation to God, a
state

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state of dependence ; we live at God's dispose, and
subject to his controul ; then it will be dependence
upon God, submission to him and acknowledgment
of him ; because he is our superior and governour.
If we do otherwise, we do contrary to the reason of
things. Or if we consult our sense and experience ;
then thankfulness to God and loving affections be-
cause of the proof we have of his goodness, kind-
ness and faithfulness to us. Or if we consider our
faults, and remember the trespasses we have com-
mitted against him, then humble deprecations, a
sense of God's patience and forbearance. Or lastly,
if we believe that God will be our judge, then stu-
dy and endeavour to approve ourselves to him. Now
if we answer our relation to God, where can there
be any place for profaneness, insolence, pride, pre-
sumption, arrogance, self-assuming, since we come
into being at God's call, continue in being by his
allowance, and must leave this being, which here
we have by his appointment. So that all acts of
impiety are contrary to the light of our reason ; and
whosoever is impious in any degree or particular
whatsoever, he doth *hold the truth in unrighteousness* ;
he confounds his principles, acts contrary to his na-
ture, and contradicts the principles of God within
him. To make this further out ; this is fundamen-
tal to all religion, that every one of us is *made* to
know there is a God, without any teaching what-
soever ; man in the use of his reason, by force of
mind and understanding, may as well know that
there is a God that made the world and governs it,
as he may know, by the use of his eyes, that there

is

is a sun in the firmament. For are we not *made* to know there is a God? Tully observed, * that if we by our reason, find out *that* which is above our reason, then we are made to know that there is an intelligent agent, transcendently high above mind and understanding in us; and that that we know, *we* did not do, we must necessarily acknowledge to be the product of the superior understanding. The first knowledge is, that there is a God: if God had not *made* us to know that he is, then it plainly appears that God could never judge us; there is nothing wherein he could have demanded of us: if we were not made to know that he is, we could never know it; for this we can never be taught; for upon whose credit shall we believe it? It is not *divine faith*, unless it be grounded on divine authority; all else is either *reason*, or *human persuasion*, *credulity*, or *experience*. We are not capable of *faith*, unless we know there is a God; for if there be faith in God, we must suppose that he *is*; for faith is *a receiving something on divine authority*: and if there be not a natural knowledge that God *is*, there is no possibility of any faith. Now if God do not make me to know that he is; if any one should propose to me in the name of God, I should ask, who that is? There were therefore an absolute impossibility of faith, if God had not made man to know that he is. Men know by the use of their reason, that there is a God; and then when a man receives any proposition from God's authority, that is *faith*. Natural knowledge, you see, is antecedent and fundamental

* De natura Deorum, Lib. 2.

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to faith. — It is as natural and proper, for mind and understanding in man, to tend towards God, as for heavy things to tend towards their center : for God is the center of immortal souls. All understandings seek after God, and have a sense and feeling of God ; and the mind and spirit of man is a candle in man, lighted by God, and doth discover God ; it is a faculty in man to God, and to be employed about God. This I am sure the apostle faith in the two next verses, that it is knowable to mind and understanding, that there is a God from the creation of things, and from providence. If reason did not apprehend God, religion could not be learned ; for there would be nothing in nature to graft on. Besides, we know in reason that first principles are self-evident, must be seen in their own light, and are perceived by an inward power of nature. For, as we say, *out of nothing comes nothing* ; so grant nothing, and nothing can be proved. Wherefore, it must be within the reach of reason to find that there is a God : for upon God's authority, supposing his being and veracity, we admit and receive all the results of his will. — If God had not *made* man to know there is a God ; there is nothing that God could have demanded of him ; nothing wherein he might have challenged him, nor nothing that he could have expected man should have received from him. Therefore the make of man, the natural use of mind and understanding, this is enough to satisfy any one concerning the being of God, and his essential perfections. And if so, whosoever is impious to God, stands up in rebellion against him, whosoever is not subject to all his commands,

commands, this man doth certainly sin against his conscience, and doth practise against his light, and is guilty of *holding the truth in unrighteousness*. Thus every one that is impious, ungodly, profane, or a despiser of Deity, is self-condemned : sins against his light, and goes against his conscience ; goes against his very make, and doth that which is violent, horrid and unnatural. This is the first.

2dly, The second species of sin is unrighteousness. Now righteousness refers to the duties we mutually owe one another ; *to do as we would be done by ; to do equally and justly, not arbitrarily*. He that fails in justice, and equal dealing with men, he doth *hold the truth in unrighteousness*. Now this I find, this principle, *doing as we would be done by*, according to rule, not wilfully and arbitrarily ; this hath recommended the christian religion to heathens and to others. That that *you would not have done to you, do not to another*. This did highly recommend the christians to *Severus*, a heathen emperor. How doth violence and fraud perplex and interrupt human affairs ? How settledly do men live, where love and justice do take place ; in comparison of places arbitrary and lawless ? — There is a secret harmony in the soul, with the rule of righteousness ; there is no displacency, offence or reluctance : and there is an antipathy arising at the appearance of evil, as unnatural to it : but a complacency in good as the eldest and first acquaintance. So *Gen. xxxix. 9. How can I do this wickedness ?* We see that the mind of a good man takes offence at evil, is grieved at it, not at all fitted to it ? There arises a displacency,

V o l. III. K

placency, as in all force and contra-natural impression.——Iniquity and sin in the conscience, are of the most mischievous nature and quality. Should all the world agree and concur to sink a man into a state of lowness, beggary and misery ; it would not be brought about so effectually by any other means, as by sin and guilt. Where there is a pure mind and an upright conscience, innocency and integrity ; there consequently, are internal peace, satisfaction, composure. But on the other side ; if a man have sense of guilt on his mind ; where a man knows himself faulty ; he fears uncertainly, infinitely : he fears every thing that appears, yea that which doth not appear, as the poet expresses it ; for guilt is always prophetic of what is mischievous. A man may better apply, here, in this case, the words of *Ahab* (1 Kings xxii. 8.) than he did to the prophet; he always prophesies evil concerning me, 2 *Chron.* xviii. 7. That for the second instance. The

3^d, Is *sobriety* and temperance in the government of our own persons. As we consist of two parts ; of spirit and of body ; so we shall fall under a double obligation as to ourselves. And if we do ourselves right, we are under obligation to our minds doubly ; to inform our understandings ; and to refine our spirits by moral principles. The mind is to be informed with knowledge, and refined with moral virtue. Ignorance and improbity are mental diseases, and it is worse for a man to have an ill-affected mind, than an ill-disposed body ; it is so much the worse, as the mind of man is better than his body. We find that nature hath given to man faculties ;

ties ; but industry and study do acquire the habits. A neglected mind is, according to *Solomon's* observation, *a sluggard's field grown over with thistles and thorns*, Prov. xxiv. 31. We may say of such a man, that he hath his mind only for salt, and he hath no other use of it. But can any man that is rational or sober, think that God gave him an immortal spirit, but as salt, only to keep his body from stench and putrefaction. The mind being superior, is not to be subjected to the body, nor to the things of the body ; we ought to attend upon the refinement of our minds, more than the concernments of our bodies, as our minds do transcend our bodies ; neither ought there to be an unequal distribution of attendance, but according to the proportion of the worth and value ; we ought to improve our minds so far, as much over and above, as our minds do transcend the body. For as it is requisite and comely that *sobriety* be the mind's temper, so it is that there be a moderate and temperate use of the things of the body ; for nature is content with a few things. That which is violent is unnatural ; that exercise which is unhealthy for the body, doth also stupify the mind. So that upon this account also, vice is unnatural.——Whosoever is proud and conceited, whosoever is intemperate, lascivious, or wanton, he doth *bold the truth in unrighteousness*. For these things have foundation, and are grounded in man, *viz.* sobriety, modesty, and an humble sense : the desires of nature are moderate, and do keep within bounds ; so that in whatsoever miscarriages men do fall, in

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all these they do go against their light, and hold the
truth in unrighteousness.

Therefore *virtue*, in every kind, is according to
the sense of human nature, the dictates of reason and
understanding, and the sense of man's mind. And
vice, in every kind, is grievous, monstrous, and un-
natural. A man forces himself, when he is vicious;
and a man kindly uses himself, when he acts ac-
cording to the rules of virtue. And I dare say, this
is so certain, that all but those who have vitiated
their faculties, all those who have not abused them-
selves, all but habituated sinners, understand that
virtue is *conservative to the nature of man*, and that
all evil practices *destroy it*: to do according to the
dictates of reason, this is conservative of a man's
mind. Virtue is conservative to the reason of man's
mind by sobriety and modesty; for these keep men
in their wits; any man that is proud or conceited,
is in danger to be distracted. And then it preserves
the health and the strength of our bodies, by chasti-
ty, and by temperance.

Thus have I shewn you in the three great instan-
ces of virtue, the three fundamentals of religion, the
three great materials of conscience, which are im-
mutable, unalterable, and indispensable, that are set-
tled in the very foundation of God's creation; that
virtue is connatural and well-founded, and that *vice* is
unnatural and destructive to the nature of man. So
that there is no man hath internal peace, that is ei-
ther neglective of his duty to God; or that is un-
righteous; or that is intemperate, as to the use of
the things of the body; or intoxicated by fond con-
ceits

ceits in the sense of his mind. But into whatsoever species of sin men fall, they sin against the dictates of conscience, and *hold the truth in unrighteousness*. What is contrary to the order of reason, is contrary to the state of nature in intellectuals. Those that are ungodly or unrighteous in these *three* great instances; that bear no reverence to God; that do not act towards their fellow-creatures according to the rules of justice; that abuse their bodies, do not govern their minds, neither improve them in knowledge, or refine them by virtue: all these do controul their natural light, and are *self-condemned*. So here my proposition is plainly made out, that all the unrighteous in the world are self-condemned.

But methinks I hear it said, that I speak but like a philosopher, or a good honest heathen; for some men think that *virtue* is another thing than grace; a heathen word, not a christian. I appeal to two witnesses, and both of them apostles, *viz.* St. Peter and St. Paul. 2 Peter i. 3. *Hath called us to glory and virtue*: glory the upshot and the consummation of all: and he makes virtue so material, that he puts virtue for glory. And verse 5th, he bids us *add to our faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, &c.* Then for St. Paul, Phil. iv. 8. where he doth sum up all that he thinks worthy to insist upon; *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.* And can he superadd any thing after these? Yes. *If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things, in the use of your own*

150 *The absolute necessity of religious obedience,*
reason, think them fit, and just, and becoming you.
If you think yourselves christians, charge yourselves
with the study and practice of all *virtue*.

Now if ungodly and unrighteous men are self-condemned, can it be imputed to God as severity to condemn them again? He doth but *actum agere*. Great reason for that. That judge will be excused from all severity, who passes sentence of execution upon a malefactor, whom his own conscience accuses. The Psalmist saith, *Psal. vii. 11, 12. that God is angry with the wicked every day*. For the ungodly and unrighteous man, doth put out the candle of God's own lighting in himself purposely, that he may do evil without check and controul: he doth check the everlasting rule of righteousness, goodness and truth, which is the law of heaven: he doth confound the very order of things, and disturbs the government of the world which is God's family; and doth knowingly abuse his own liberty. I therefore conclude, that these sorts of men are guilty of gross misbehaviour against the truth, that is in their mind, or can be come at by the use of reason and understanding. To give you a particular character of them: they are, 1. All those that do not receive truth in the love of it. 2. All those that are under the power of any unmortified *lust*. 3. They who design ultimately *their own ends*, their honour, their pleasure, their revenue, &c. 4. They who are dearly in love with this *present world*; and to gain this, they will subordinate all matters of conscience. 5. Those that are of dastardly and cowardly spirits; for these *fear them that kill the body; and fear not him*
that

and unavoidable perdition of the disobedient. 151

that can cast both soul and body into hell, Mat. x. 28.

These are the persons that are most deeply guilty of this great miscarriage. — But now, though my hand be heavy upon the dissolute and profane, I must still make an apology for the imperfections and failings of those that are sincere and upright, and in the honesty of their heart, mean God, righteousness and truth ; though in some particulars they fail, sometimes are mistaken, and fall short of their good intentions : I will not charge these persons in this language of *holding truth in unrighteousness*. Three sorts of persons therefore I except. 1st, I apologize for all such sort of persons as mean God, righteousness and truth ; but upon a sudden surprisal, before they are awakened to the use of their principles, sometimes do amiss. 2. When under *dark and confused apprehensions*, they cannot see before them, or, 3. In case of *violent or long lasting temptation*. — I greatly distinguish between these two cases : such persons who in some particulars fall short, or are mistaken, cases that do consist of a great many circumstances : for we observe, they may be out in the conclusions that do not carefully mind all the circumstances and particulars. But for the *great instances* of piety, righteousness, and good self-government ; these being written in the nature of man, as it were with a sun-beam ; as to these they do not fail : for as to these, *he that is born of God, doth not commit sin*.

I come to make some inferences.

1. I do then observe, that men *need not be so bad* as they are : for if this be true ; that ungodly and unrighteous

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unrighteous men do hold the truth in unrighteousness :
then men may escape the great pollutions of the world,
through the knowledge of God and Christ, 2 Pet. ii.
20. We are very apt to lay all the fault upon our
natures ; but really our wills are rather to be blam-
ed. That that undoes us, is our perverse wills, cor-
rupt affections, stubborn hearts ; and these do more
harm in the world than weak heads : 'tis not so
much want of knowledge as goodness. God is a
great deal more known in the world, than he is ei-
ther observed or loved. But this will be the world's
condemnation, that where men either *did* know or
might know, there they either grossly neglected them-
selves, or went against their light ; that men put out
the candle of God's spirit in them, that they may
do evil without check or controul ; that men take
upon them to controul the settled and immutable
laws of everlasting righteousness, goodness, and truth
which is the law of heaven ; that men are bold to
confound order and government in God's family,
(for so the world is ;) that men do evil *knowingly*,
in the abuse of their liberty and freedom ; whereas
God himself, in whom there is the fulness of all li-
berty, doth declare of himself, that all his ways are
ways of goodness, righteousness, and truth. And can
God by power or priviledge do that which is not fit
and just ? Is there any unrighteousness in God ?
God forbid. Yet creatures that are of limited pow-
er, and have liberty by participation only, pretend-
ing the use of liberty, extend liberty beyond the
bounds of law, and do *that* which is not fit to be
done. This will be the world's condemnation. In
the

the case of sin there is internal guilt : a man doth wrong the principles of his mind ; he breaks his internal peace, and will rue it to eternity.

2. I observe that the cause of a creature's misery is rational and accountable ; and men dishonour God, and misreport him, when they say any creature falls into misery by God's omnipotency. There is no danger from God, if men be harmless and not self-condemned. The judgment of God at the last day will be easy ; for there will be none to be condemned, but what were condemned before. For man's misery and harm doth not proceed from abroad, but arises out of himself : and is not by *positive infliction*. Men run upon mistakes : the wicked and profane think, that if God *would*, they may take liberty to gratify and please themselves, and no harm done ; and that it is the *will* of God only that limits and restrains them : and they think that they were out of danger, if God would forbear a positive infliction ; and that hell is *only* an incommodious place, that God by his power throws them into. This is the grand mistake. Hell is not only a positive infliction ; neither is it possible that any man should be so miserable as the hellish state makes him, by any outward place only, but by the misery that ariseth out of his own self. For if omnipotency should load me with all burdens ; if I were whole in myself, I could bear them ; but if I be *faulty and guilty*, then I have a wound within me, and *I have nothing in myself that is true to myself*. The fewel of *Tophet* burning, is the guiltiness of mens consciences, malignity, and a naughty disposition against

154 *The absolute necessity of religious obedience,*
gainst goodness and holiness, and God's withdrawing, because the person is incapable of his communication. Sin is an act of violence in itself : the sinner doth force himself, and stirs up strife within himself ; and in a sinner there is that *within*, which doth reluctate, and condemn him in the inward court of his own conscience. For if *our hearts did not condemn us*, all *without* might be avoided, 1 *John* iii. 21. I dare say all else would fail, if this internal guilt and self-condemnation might be removed, and this naughty and malignant disposition against God righteousness and truth. But this naughtiness of disposition, and spitefulness against God and goodness, and incapacity of repentance, is *that* which continues the subject in affliction and misery. Hell therefore is not a positive infliction, but doth naturally follow upon guiltiness, and a spiteful, devilish, naughty disposition unto God and goodness.

3. Again, I observe from hence, there is something in every man, upon which we may work, to which we may apply ; to wit, *the light of reason and conscience*, to which the difference of good and evil may be made appear ; for unrighteous and ungodly men are self-condemned. If we therefore declare godliness, righteousness and truth, men have a *voice* to give testimony ; and *conscience* in men will yield, where mens lusts are not to be overcome, notwithstanding the power lust hath over them. If reason may not *command*, it will *condemn*. It is easier for one to approve himself to the *conscience* of a profane person, than to his humour.

Lastly,

Lastly, Here you may have an account what it is that gives a check and a stop to the motions of the divine spirit, and those that are the instruments of God for conversion ; there is an error in the first concoction, which is hardly remedied, which is want of advertency and consideration. Men do not awaken their principles, but give themselves up headily to do what they cannot justify themselves in, when they come to consider. Now there is no place for the further motion of the divine grace, when the former grace is neglected, and render'd ineffectual. It is *self-neglect*, and *voluntary allowing of ourselves in evil*, which brings us to misery : for there is no *invincible ignorance*, in respect of things good in themselves, in their nature and quality, and necessary ; but this is mens condemnation, that they do not answer God's call. And not to answer his call, and be awakened when God speaks, this is a new provocation ; so that men are *twice dead*, as St. Jude hath it, *verse 12*. But to proceed. *The wrath of God is declared against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*. I observe from hence,

1. That this is *plain dealing*. Wherein is there any thing hard or unreasonable in the dealings and proceedings of God ? Behold his justice and his righteous dealing. Here is demerit on the sufferer's part, *holding truth in unrighteousness* ; and on the inflictor's part, plain dealing : *for the wrath of God is declared*. God deals clearly and openly with men ; and men may know what they have to trust to. We seem agrieved at God's plagues and judgments ; which do so much disturb our peace and settlement in the world ;

156 *The absolute necessity of religious obedience,*
world ; and think the world is disturbed by them.
But we do greater acts of violence : for we imprison truth, and we take upon us to controul, and do other things than the reason of things dictates to us, and directs us to do. We give to God true cause of offence : so we are the disturbers, not the plagues of God.

2. They who are in the scripture sense *sinners*, are in a state of great *degeneracy* and apostacy ; and, hereof they ought to be ashamed, and hastened to get out of so bad a condition, for *they hold the truth in unrighteousness*.

3. Hence we observe the formal object of displeasure ; not creatures, but sinners : *wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin ?* Lam. iii. 39.

But in the last place. When I consider these two verses together, the former verse declaring the sum and substance of the gospel, that *whosoever* doth believe the gospel and live according to it, shall finally be saved : and on the other side, God doth declare that all ungodly and unrighteous men are the objects of his wrath. My observation now is this : that it is truly evangelical and apostolical, as well to declare the *wrath of God* against those that do continue in sin, as to hold forth the grace and goodness of God toward those that do repent and believe : for you have the one of these in the former verse ; and the other in the latter verse : and great ground for this ; for 1. It is always good as a *means* that doth promote the end. 2. It is the *necessity* of the case : for we are very prone to security and self-flattery, and
therefore

therefore it is well that we be admonished of our danger. 3. All is not in us ingenuity toward God. 4. We are compounded of *different principles*: there is in us the *law of the members*, as well as the *law of the mind*, Rom. vii. 23. 5. It is but *plain-dealing* to the unconverted and apostates.

Now to apply this.

1. This may better inform those that are conceitedly wise, and undeceive them in their partiality and self-flattery. For some think that in the gospel-state we should make no use, no improvement of the threatnings of God. These are wise in their own conceit: for you see the apostle doth subjoin them.

2. It gives an account of the *true zeal* of those that severely challenge immorality. No ignorance excuseth *immorality* in any instance whatsoever: whereas invincible ignorance doth apologize for infidelity in the chiefest point. The reason is this, because for the great points of piety, righteousness, sobriety and temperance, God hath *made* every one to know them. But for the resolutions of his will, men must be persuaded of God; and if God doth not make application to men, where he doth not give, he doth not require. The gospel priviledges are not to give protection to sinners; but are cities of refuge for penitents. They misunderstand the affairs of religion who take not all the principles of religion together, but do unsuitably distribute; not allotting seasonably to the several constitutions their proper proportions. We take a great deal more care in the affairs of our bodies; in these we consider mens present state and condition: we consider
mens

158 *The absolute necessity of religious obedience, &c.*
mens age and constitution ; and govern ourselves
both to quantity and quality ; for we know that
unseasonable and unproportionable food doth not
nourish, but annoy with humours, and our body is
the worse for it. So spiritual dainties are not to
intoxicate the head with conceit, but to establish
and make a healthy constitution of soul : and what
is that, but to make a man ingenuous toward God,
and in religion, rational and intelligent ?

Lastly, I take notice of the boldness and presumption of these obstinate, rebellious, and contumacious sinners, who having this proclamation from the majesty of heaven, that the *wrath of God, &c.* yet will dare to continue in practices of unrighteousness, and assume to themselves power and authority to controul the established laws of everlasting goodness, righteousness, and truth, and to vary from the reason of things, to gratify their own sense, and to please their own humours, and to serve their own ends, and to take upon them to over-rule and unsettle all things that are holy, settled, and established from eternity. What shall a man say to such persons ? And yet the atheistical and profane are guilty of this contumacy. But as the apostle says, *their condemnation is just, Rom. iii. 8. and their judgment lingers not, their condemnation sleepeth not, 2 Pet. ii. 3.* For if a man be exemplary in wickedness, if he seduce others by ill practice, if he be an open scandal to government ; we think it necessary to cut him off, that others may not sin by his example, so that we need not wonder at the judgments of God in this world ; nor the future condemnation of

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of the wicked and profane. For the text tells us, that those that are obnoxious to God's wrath, are *persons of ungodly practice ; so that they are of themselves condemned : they cannot give an account to the reason of their own minds, nor satisfy their own consciences ; but are hurried on, and transported by furious and violent lusts ; holding the truth in unrighteousness, they are self-condemned before they be condemned of God.*

DISCOURSE LVII.

The illustrious Manifestations of God,
and the inexcusable Ignorance of Men.

ROM. i. 19, 20.

Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them ; for God hath revealed it to them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse.

THough I intended no further, yet considering how full and pregnant this scripture is, against the *affected atheism* of a degenerate and an apostate world ; I shall not yet take myself off.

In

In the former verse the apostle doth affirm that all ungodly and unrighteous persons *do hold the truth in unrighteousness*: all impious, profane and atheistical persons, all unrighteous men, all controulers of the right of things, all intemperate persons are men that sin against principles of conscience, they imprison truth, and sin against their light; they go against the dictates of true reason, they go against their very make; they know they do evil, and are self-condemned in what they do. Now this being a great assertion, and an affair of life and death, the apostle proceeds to *prove* it; and these words contain the apostle's argument. He proves it thus, because *God is universally knowable*: of which argument, before I do proceed to discourse further, I have something to premise.

In that the apostle takes upon him to *shew* and *prove* by *reason*. I observe three things.

1. That here is a check and controul to the forward and presumptuous imposers on men that take upon them to dogmatize, to dictate and determine, and are angry with all persons that will not take up with *their* sense, and be concluded by it. These persons take upon them more than the apostle did.

2. I here observe that the great points of religion, stand upon the grounds of *truest reason*; for the apostle here, after he hath asserted, proceeds to *prove* by *reason*.

3. God's ways and dealings with his creatures are accountable in a way of reason. But some men think, that God uses *arbitrary power*; and that they might escape without punishment, if he *would*, and that

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that it is nothing but his will and pleasure, that they are challenged for lawless and unlawful practices.

——In the 17th verse he hath declared *the way of life and salvation*; and in the 18th, *the way of misery and death*. Therefore the ways of God are accountable in reason.

Now if this were not the way of God, a way worthy of truth, we might ask, why this apostle may not refer us to his publick authority; who might, if any one, because of his extraordinary conversion and commission from heaven? But he declines *that*, and *proves by reason*. But this great truth is hereby hinted to us, *that the way of reason is the way most accommodate to human nature*. Therefore let us lay aside imposing one upon another; or using any canting in religion. Let us talk sense and reason; for the apostle doth here show and prove *by reason*. And this doth God himself, who hath all prerogative and privilege; he saith, that he will draw them *with the cords of a man*; Hof. xi. 4. and what is that, but *arguments* satisfactory to the mind of men? And in the evangelical prophet *Isaiah*, *shew yourselves to be men*, xlvi. 8. that is, awaken your rational and intellectual faculties, and take things into serious and impartial consideration, and I will convince you. Certainly therefore it were well becoming the church of *Rome*, who doth so highly pretend to apostolical succession, it would become this church, to shew by evidence of reason, that their twelve supernumerary points of religion, upon which we leave them, that there is reason for them.——It is an apology for any finite, fallible creature, when

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he is mistaken, *if he had some reason for his mistake*; and if he be out, if he can but shew *why he did so think*, you have him excused. 'Tis double security and a high advantage to any teacher, or instructor, to have in readiness to shew, that what he saith, is not *his private opinion or imagination*, but is in conjunction with the *reason of things*, or the *principles of God's creation*; and of *divine revelation*, if it be a matter of *faith*. The reason of things, in all matters of natural knowledge; and revelation in scripture, for all matters of faith, are the only rules. Let every man that takes upon himself to impose upon others, let him think that it doth become him to shew by reason, and the evidence of truth, if in a matter of God's creation; if it be a matter of faith, by text of scripture.

This, but by way of observation, because the apostle doth decline his commission of apostleship, and doth prove by *common reason*.

That which is the apostle's argument, is, that all those who in the language of scripture are *sinners*, all that are ungodly, impious towards God; and unrighteous in his family, they sin against their light, go against the principles of natural conscience, imprison truth, and sin against their knowledge, and are self-condemned. And his argument is, because God made man to know, that he himself is, and his natural perfections.—— This is here plainly attested, *ver. 19. because that which, &c.* It is shortly spoken to; but, because it is a matter of great weight, it is spoken more fully in the next verse, *ver. 20. The invisible things of God from the creation,*

are now clearly seen, by the light of reason and understanding, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; that is, that there is a God, and his natural perfections; for, whereas here is expressed only his power, it is an usual *synecdoche*, instancing in *one*, and understanding *all*; because there is the same reason for one as another. *From the creation of the world*; that is the highest date of a creature; for a creature cannot bear date before God himself; but a creature bears date from the creation.——Now this is that that I am to declare against all the atheistical and profane in the world, that the works of creation and providence are sufficient to satisfy all rational creatures, of the being of God; the being of God almighty, and all his natural perfections are plainly seen by the effects of God's creation. And this is necessary, in the *first* place, to religion and conscience, that men may be made to know there is a God: for what is piety? Piety is justice towards God; a man is pious that doth his natural homage to God as his sovereign. And what is conscience in man? Conscience is knowledge in us with God: we know, and God knows. *Secondly*, it is antecedent to faith. There is an impossibility there should be any faith in the world, unless there were a natural knowledge of God; for belief is receiving something from God; and if a man be not made to know there is a God, he may ask as *Pharaoh* did, when any one comes to speak in his name, *who that is?* Ex. v. 2. *Thirdly*, it is fundamental to God's requiring duty of man, and his judging the world;

for if God had not made man to know that he is, man could not be under obligation of duty to God, and no more liable to demand and challenge than the beasts. And how then could God govern the world? See therefore how the atheist doth go about to demolish all. Now since this scripture, and other scriptures, use no other arguments to prove there is a God (for revelation cannot prove it, revelation supposes it;) therefore I shall forbear all other reasons: for tho' I might produce many metaphysical things; yet because they are abstract from sense, they shall not be named. Therefore I shall as in the text, only name the effects of God. And this is *the best demonstration*; the demonstrating an *antecedent cause by subsequent effects*.

There are *effects* in the world natural of inanimates, of vegetables, and sensitives; and in the world moral, of spiritual substances, and intelligent agents, that shew there is a God; for they do far transcend mind and understanding in man: therefore they must be the product of some higher being. And if we bring a man to acknowledge a being, that is abler and wiser than himself, he acknowledges Deity.

Beza doth excellently glose upon these words. This *natural knowledge of God*, saith he, is wrapt up in the inward of man's mind and soul; that men, whether they will or no, whether they be pleased or disaffected, whensoever they look into themselves, and consult with their own principles, and answer their very make, so oft they are convinced and satisfied in this knowledge, *that there is a God*; and if they

they are averſe, they are ſelf-confounded. So that we may conclude, that if any creature on earth, that is born in the ſpecies of man, and that is partaker of human nature, be devoid of *ſenſe of Deity*, it is one of theſe three caſes. (1.) It is, where there is not one ſerious thought, nothing becoming man's principles, no product of reaſon, mind and underſtanding ; but where a man is ſunk below his nature ; nay, where he ceases to be in his kind, and is worſe than a *Gibeonite*. This is atheiſm by *groſs ſelf-neglect*. Such a man may be without God in the world, who only hath reaſon and underſtanding to live according to ſenſe, and to purſue his animal deſires. And this man lives every day to his loſs, to be leſs and leſs, he lives to be no body ; he doth not act according to the excellency of the principles of his kind. Or, (2.) if not ſuch a man who is devoid of the ſenſe and knowledge of God, then he is one whoſe *affectation* it is to be an atheiſt ; it is where there is affectation and choice to be an atheiſt ; and then he would fain have it ſo, and this is his deſire ; and he ſtruggles with himſelf, doth what he can to keep all thoughts of Deity out of his mind. He is one that hath an ill-affectation of being lawleſs and arbitrary, and gratifying his ſenſes ; and ſo he doth *affect being an atheiſt*, that he may freely and without controul, commit ſpiritual fornication with the creature. Or, (3.) It is where is contracted *reprobacy* of mind, by violent and unnatural practice, where men by wicked practices have contracted reprobacy of mind, and have wrought out of themſelves the ſenſe of human nature, and made

void all the principles of God's creation. And this case is often represented in scripture, that men by an ill, and unnatural use of their principles, have wrought out the natural sense they have had of God in their minds; as by the prophet *Isa. vi. 10.* where it is said, *make the heart of this people fat, &c.* which place is referred to six times in the new testament, and speaks to this purpose, that man, by gross abuse of himself, may choak the principles of his nature. These men have confounded their principles, and transformed themselves into a monstrous state; and we must not produce any thing from what is true of a monster, to prove a natural state; for, by wickedness, mens minds come to be blinded. *Aristotle* doth well tell us, that the wickedness of mens lives and practices, vitiates and corrupts the judgment of their mind and understanding. — Therefore I conclude, that if any one that is born a man, in the use of his reason, hath no sense of Deity; either he is an atheist by gross *self-neglect*; or by *affectation*; or one that by wicked practice hath contracted *reprobacy* of mind, and wrought out of himself the sense of human nature, and made void all the principles of God's creation.

But to prevent any one's mistake, I will here distinguish between the materials of religion. — There be the materials of *natural knowledge*. They are the things I am speaking to, and those God *made man to know*: nothing more knowable in the world than these; piety toward God, sobriety and temperance in the government of ourselves, and justice and righteousness in our dealings one with another.

ther. These are immutable and indispenfible truths, and every man is under an obligation to them. But then for *articles of faith*; these are the resolutions of the divine will, and only knowable by God's voluntary revelation and discovery: and to this purpose the bible is God's instrument in the world; and concerning these no man can know, but by revelation from God. Secrets of *men* none knows, but he to whom he will reveal them; so of God.

But that there is a God almighty, it is the most evident thing in reason: and I am confident no man can prove any thing in reason, if he cannot prove that there is a God. It is knowable from the creation, it is knowable from effects, within the cognizance of human faculties. To conclude with Tully's argument (who is a better *divine* than some who pretend to be christians, and yet seem to deny reason.) "Man himself, being a rational and intelligent agent; so an agent of highest order, ability and perfection, in this visible world; finding his highest principle, his *understanding* transcended by sundry effects of wisdom and power, whereto he well knows he can make no pretence at all; he cannot avoid acknowledging a *higher agent* than himself: upon whose power and will these surpassing effects depend."——A man in the use of his reason, surveys the things that are about him, he sees *causes* and effects; he sees things depending one upon another; he sees things done with the greatest skill and exactness: he doth very well know, he did not order these things: how came they to pass then?

——We ourselves are intelligent agents, we can
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do many things : we can disarm the creation below us, and turn them to our own defence ; but for the sun, moon, and stars, &c. we cannot produce these things. But we, that are intelligent agents do many strange effects in comparison of what the beasts below do ; *they* cannot take cognizance of *our* actions, but there are operations beyond our understandings, and which surpass our wisdom : therefore, because we (who are able to do such things ourselves) are intelligent, and have understanding, we must assert, that there must be an intelligent agent that is higher and nobler than ourselves, upon whose power and skill these surpassing effects depend. This is a true knowledge of God : and where more is not revealed, God will not require more. This is *Tully's* argument : and this comes home to the apostle's argument in the text ; for the apostle says, his being, his power (*one for all his perfections*) they are understood in a way of reason, *by the effects of God in the world.* The height and excellency of man in the use of his reason, is overborn and transcended by the effects in nature. Therefore they are the effects of an agent more wise, more perfect and more skillful, more knowing, and more powerful ; and he is abundantly good, he must needs be good, because he communicates to us below him.

Thus stands the argument. Things that do exceed, and go beyond the direction, and guidance and knowledge of us intelligent agents, do plainly discover an eternal mind ; guiding, governing and disposing of them ; which mind must be antecedent and original to mind in us : and mind in man can

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be no more than in resemblance, and in some measure of participation of that mind which is primary, original and independent: and our participation is in measure, proportion and degree. And where mind and understanding in *man* is overborn, nothing else can make a pretence: for there is nothing below man that hath either the perfection of memory, mind or cogitation. Nothing below man that can recal by memory things that are past, or can foresee things that are future, and comprehend all things that are coexistent; to look backward, and make them as present, to foresee future effects, out of their antecedent causes; and to comprehend all things present. And therefore there being nothing below man that can attain these effects which the mind of man doth; then if the mind of man is overborn, if man cannot, nothing else can; and if man cannot, they have some other cause. For man being the highest order in the visible world, the cause that doth attain effects higher than he can reach to, must be more intelligent at least, and primarily original, and independent. And we ought to imagine a more sagacious and plainly divine mind, whence man hath got to himself, knowledge and understanding, by participation: we ought to acknowledge such a mind in the ordering those things, which the greatest diligence in man cannot reach. For since it is beyond man's reach, and understanding, thought, invention, and comprehension, it is an argument that there is a God. If I have this notion, that there is an intelligent agent, who doth infinitely transcend me, then I have a right notion of God
and

and all that is secondary, owes obedience, and service, and ought to do homage. Now can any man have a better argument, or that that is more accommodate to his principles than this? If there be *that* in the nature of things, that mind and understanding in man can never bring about, govern, nor controul, then it follows, that something greater, higher, and wiser than man, doth effect it, dispose it, and govern it. And now I am to prove the assumption, that there are such effects in the world; particularly,

(1.) The variety, curiosity, and accurateness of nature. We can in the use of our understandings only follow after God, take some cognizance of him in his works. Now there are such things in nature that the mind of man bears no proportion to.

(2.) Again: I instance in the *proportion* that things bear to one another; and this is *Solomon's* argument in *Ecc. vii. 14.* and *Ecc. iii. 11.* To what purpose would be the visive faculty, if not light and colours? the power of hearing, if not sounds? the power of taste, if things not fitting? Now the *fitting* of things to things, sheweth, that these things are the effects of the highest reason, and most perfect intelligence.

(3.) In the next place, I insist on the order, course and motion of the heavenly bodies, their light and influence; which is so exact, that whereas we say, that quick motion sets all on fire, there is the quickest motion, and yet no exasperation or conflagration because there is no interfering.

(4.) In the next place, I instance in the place of fire, water, earth and air: the interchangeable intercourse

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tercourse and necessity of the wind to fan the air, which would otherwise putrify and corrupt. Likewise the motion of the sea : for waters standing putrify ; yet these have their interchangeable serenities and calmness.

(5.) In the next place : the change of the seasons of the year, the usefulness of them and the necessity of them. So it is ordered, that, so far as may be, the whole world hath a just proportion of day and night, and so answerable a proportion of cold and heat.

Now these diversities do declare, that the efficient was an intelligent agent. And since we that are the highest intelligents in this visible world are at a loss ; therefore we are forced to acknowledge, that there is an intelligent agent of greater ability than we ourselves are.

(6.) I proceed further. The provision in nature to maintain and water the earth ; the want of which is the mother of drought ; and drought is the principle of barrenness. And this provision is both from above and from below. Now we observe that water, and so every thing, doth gather itself to its like. What therefore is it that hinders the mighty clouds, and the mighty seas, that they do not come together ? So we may be drowned by that by which we are provided for. This is nothing else but the contrivance of a wise agent. This you have in the first chapter of *Genesis* ; *the waters above the firmament, and the waters under the firmament*, the great sea : and God keeps these asunder, and we walk in the midst of them, and seem to be in danger to be destroyed

destroyed by the clouds and by the sea, which would affect to come together, but that the infinite wisdom hath assigned them bounds. Now when we consider these things; though we see not God with our eyes (for we see not our own souls by bodily sense; they being too subtile for bodily sense,) I say, when we consider these things, we cannot doubt of the maker, moderator, and governor of so great a work, and so great a performance. And though he be invisible to our sense, yet our understanding may find him out; for mind and understanding are a peculiar faculty for God, to seek after God.

Now this is a just explication of the text, which saith that the Deity is plainly *understood by the things that are made*; which is an argument, from the reason of things. For a miracle a man may call in question many ways; but if any man produce an argument taken from the reason of things, it will stay upon the understanding, and will convince and satisfy: and the more a man thinks of it, the more he will be assured.

Now, it may be, some will be so severe, as to condemn this way to be used in matters of religion. Such I would desire to consider the course God took to convince *Job*; read but four chapters in the book of *Job* xxxviii. xxxix. xl. and xli. where God humbles *Job*, and brings him down from his confidence; by demonstrations of himself, taken from the effects of nature, and from the wonderful providence of God, in first making them, and then governing them.

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I proceed. If the *world natural*, and the things that are there, do clearly demonstrate and prove the existence of a God, the world of inanimates, vegetables, and insensibles : then it is absurd for a man to deny the government of the all-wise God in the affairs of the *world moral* : by that I mean of spiritual substances ; substances endued with reason and understanding, and invested with the royal privilege of liberty and freedom ; who act out of consideration and foresight : and this upon a threefold consideration.

First. In as much as the performance is *nobler and higher*, and therefore more divine. If the effects of the world natural do clearly prove God's superintendency and guidance, and do presuppose the existence of a Deity ; then much more is there a superintendency over the affairs of the world moral ; because this is nobler and higher ; and therefore more divine.

Secondly. In as much as the consequents, effects, and motions of the world moral, are of far *greater import* than the motions of the world natural : because upon the motion of the world of rational and intelligent agents who are voluntary and free ; there is attained, either the perfection of moral goodness and virtue, or else there is the defection of vice.

Thirdly. In as much as the failings and *miscarriages* are of far greater mischief : it is an act of more deformity and ugliness, for an intelligent agent to depart from the rule of right and reason ; to be in any thing exorbitant, or hurried on by base ends : it is a more shameful miscarriage, than if the sun should

should cease to enlighten the world, and ever hereafter fill the world with darkness and stench. For a man is an agent of a higher order, and to follow the order of reason is as natural to intelligent agents; as it is natural for the sun to shine, or fire to burn; and if he depart from his nature, there is a far greater miscarriage than if the natural agents should depart from their natures, and attain contrary effects. For it is according to the weight of nature, in the lower creation, and according to the dictates of true reason in the higher world of souls and spirits. And as all things in the world natural, when they are from their center, move to their center, and in their center have rest: so in the higher world, mind and understanding moves toward God, is restless till it comes to him. Reasonable souls, torn off from God, are like dead leaves that fall off from trees.

While mind and understanding rest in God, are in motion to him, employed about him; mind and understanding is in its proper use, and natural employment: but if you rend and tear mind and understanding from God, it shrivels up, shrinks, and comes to nothing; and never enjoys itself, till it return to God again.

Thus the being of God, and his natural perfections, are *understood from the things that are made.*

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DISCOURSE LVIII.

The illustrious Manifestations of God, and the inexcusable Ignorance of Men.

ROM. i. 20.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

FROM the date of a creature (for from the creation is such) the things that are invisible to sense, are clearly seen to reason and understanding; that is, that there is a God, and his natural perfections. And since this scripture, and other scriptures use no other arguments to prove there is a God, (for revelation cannot prove it, for revelation supposes it, therefore it is indispensibly necessary to all religion and conscience, that a man be *made* to know there is a God, otherwise than by testimony, for there can be no testimony in this, because it is the first truth :) I therefore keep to my text, and demonstrate an antecedent cause, by subsequent effects. And whereas hitherto I have only shewn you that it is knowable, by the use of reason and understanding, that there is a God: *all things being made in such proportion and due measure, and such fitness, one to another*: and man's reason is transcended:

cended : for we going after God are at a loss, there is so much of wisdom, and knowledge, exactness and curiosity in the things that are made. We cannot therefore but own and reverence an agent that is higher than we are, wiser than ourselves and more intelligent ; for an account is not to be given of them in way of human understanding.——

Now I will shew you by *four* arguments, that it is more knowable there is a God, and what God is, in some measure, than any thing else is knowable.

1. God is more knowable, in respect of the *amplitude and fulness of his being*, because of that ocean of *entity*, that fulness of being that is in him : for this we resolve in philosophy, things are with difficulty understood, where they are of exile entities. This is as the sea in comparison to a small rivulet. Every creature is a line leading to God. God is everywhere, in every thing ; so we cannot miss of him. For *the heavens declare the glory of God*, Psal. xix. 1. and every grass in the field declares God. Man's understanding is every where transcended. He cannot give an account how several varieties of colours are in a flower, how the same root, as of a tulip, how the same juice or glebe of earth should produce such variety of colours. We say in natural philosophy, we know not the *modes* of any thing ; we know nothing about ourselves as to the mode ; we know not the manner of our own sleeping or awaking : no man knoweth the *mode* how his soul and body are united, how the several particles of matter meet. We are puzzled to know what motion is ; we can give no account of these things ; we know

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know modes no where, because of the exility and tenuity of entity: we are puzzled, in philosophy, to know what time is, what place is. It is not because of their fulness of being, but their littleness of being: we sooner find out the sun than a lesser light; we sooner find out the sea than a little fountain. Now there being an *amplitude* and *fulness of being* in God, he is the more intelligible; he hath all *being* perfectly in him, he is therefore more knowable than creatures, that are of limited, confin'd, shallow, narrow beings. The divided, separated, scattered perfections of the whole creation are united in God; and with that advance and improvement, extended to infinite perfection.

2. The *ways of our knowing* do more truly hold of God, than of any thing else in the world. —

There are two ways of coming to the knowledge of things; the way of *perfection*, and the way of *negation*: in both these ways we come to a more full and certain knowledge of God than of any thing else in the world. (1.) In the way of *perfection*, we cannot exceed; we need not fear to add too much of God. If you speak of man's soul, or of an angel in glory, you may say too much; but speaking of God, you cannot transcend divine existence, in the enumeration of any perfections. If we would express a notion of our maker, we should employ our mind and understanding to find out what is best and what is most perfect; and then attribute and ascribe it to God. For though finite understandings may fall short, yet this is the utmost improvement of our faculties; neither can I report of him

better than what my reason and understanding tells me, is, upon every account, best and perfectest. And this is the best way to come to the knowledge of God.—— (2.) So in the way of negation we are also certain; for we can never remove imperfection, contraction, circumscription, limitation, far enough from him. Therefore we say, that words and phrases are all to be purg'd and purified from their contraction and limitation, before we can ascribe them to God. Therefore, where in scripture God is represented by the eyes, the hands, or other parts of our body, by way of accommodation to us; we must not understand these things formally, but in a way of perfection, by way of accommodation to our understandings. Now here we are at a loss; when we have done our most, we must say, God is beyond what finite and limited understandings can lay out. So that *our ways of knowing* do more truly hold of *God* than of *any thing else*: for in the way of *adding perfection*, we cannot do too much; and in the way of *limitation*, we cannot take away too much.

3. *Our relation to God.* We stand nearer related to God than we do to any thing in the world. Our *souls* and *bodies* are not nearer related, than our *souls* to *God*. God is more inward to us than our very souls; so the apostle saith, *in him we live, and move, and have our being, we are his offspring*, Acts xvii. 28. God is nearer to us than what is most ourselves. Also it is the natural and proper employment of mind and understanding, to make search and enquiry after God; *that we should seek the Lord,*

and the inexcusable ignorance of men. 179

if haply we might feel after him, and find him. The wise man says, God is known by the fitness and proportion of one thing to another, Wis. xiii. 5. Mind and understanding in man is given on purpose, that man should search after God and acknowledge him, enquire into him, and find him out. So that there is a greater propriety and naturalness of man's rational faculties to God, than there is of his eye to light, or his ear to sound; Jer. v. 21. And it is of greater deformity for a man to be intellectually blind or deaf, to be void of sense of Deity, than for any man to be blind, so as not to see; or deaf, so as not to hear.

4. Our dependence upon God, and his conservation of us, and his co-operation with us; this leads us to know him. Universal and general causes have ready acknowledgment, because to them so many things are beholding. Aristotle well observes, the sun, which is the universal cause, doth concur with every particular cause to every production. So the Psalmist, *nothing is hid from the heat of it*, Psal. xix. 6. For tho' the earth be not perceptive of the light of the sun, because of its grossness and opacity, yet it hath the virtue of it: so God is acknowledged, God's concerning himself in our affairs, and our dependence upon him, hath a kind of universal acknowledgment. Take any man of any sobriety of mind, if he do but relate a story of any thing that befalls him, he will interpose, *as God would have it*: or if he did any thing wisely, *as God put it into my mind*; and give God the chief place. Thus in several cases: as in distress, *O God!* our undertakings,

ings, *in the name of God* : our protestations, *in the presence of God*. Tho' those in the mouths of many be but words of course, spoken without inward sense of God in the mind ; yet the custom of them proceeds from a good original ; they carry reason in them, and shew nature's sense. What is without ground is not of any long continuance : but *these* meet with no reproof, gain credit, give assurance, find acceptance, and become religious persons, when used in weighty cases, and with serious minds and due intention. Since therefore there is such a naturalness between God and our souls, such a dependence of our souls upon God, it is impossible but that we should know him. They who are in any degree spiritual or intellectual, and are not altogether sunk down into a brutish spirit and sensual affection, find and feel within themselves divine suggestions, motions, and inspirations, that there are foreign suggestions and whispers, that do direct him better, and carry him beyond his own mind and resolves. Any man that hath obtained any degree of the perfection of reason, that doth follow the divine governor of man's life, *reason* ; he doth find that there are *suggestions* and *inspirations*, and that many times when he was resolv'd another way, there comes a *light* into his mind, a *still voice* ; he hears, and he is better directed. Except the atheistical, and profane, and those that are diabolical, all others *feel* God in his motions and suggestions. For this I will quote you some scriptures. *But there is a spirit in man ; and the inspiration of the almighty giveth them understanding,* Job xxxii. 8. I do not believe

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God would have made spirits finite and fallible if he did not intend himself to guide and direct such spirits. The Psalmist in *Psalms* xciv. 10. saith, 'tis he that teacheth men knowledge; shall not he know? It is brought as an argument, that God doth infinitely know, because he teacheth man knowledge. Now an argument is a thing that is known, and that men will not call in question. He proves therefore, that God must be of a universal knowledge, because he teacheth man knowledge. This is therefore that that the world is well acquainted with, that God doth inspire men, and teach men knowledge.— Thus is God most knowable of any thing in the world: and this is that I superadd. Now I infer,

First, the excellency of that we call religion. It is no stranger to human nature; nor any of the eminent notable acts of it, such as apprehension of God, faith and affiance in him, dependence on him, subjection to him, observance of him, compliance with him. None of these things are strangers to human nature. They are things natural; no ground in the world more apt to produce any plant from seed sown in that ground, than this nature of man is apt to produce these effects. It is not only a state of the foulest deformity, but also of greatest violence to be without God in the world. Man contradicts his own principles, and departs from himself, when he falls off from God. No such monster in the world, or more to be marvelled at, than a man devoid of the sense of Deity; as men having *no fear of God before their eyes*, Rom. iii. 18.

Secondly, here you have an account of the *use of reason* in matters of religion. Religion ; there is in it the *natural knowledge* of God, and the knowledge of the *revelation of his will*. Now the *natural knowledge* of God, that is the very issue, effect and product of reason : and then *revelation*, which is the other part of religion, is the resolutions and voluntary determinations of the divine will ; these reason is made acquainted with, and is the recipient of them. For to whom doth God declare, but to intelligent agents ? What doth God give his commands to, or his counsels, but to the intelligent agent, and the reason of man ? So that you see *reason* hath great place in religion ; for reason is the *recipient* of whatsoever God declares ; and those things that are according to the nature of God, the reason of man can discover. It is either the *efficient* or the *recipient* of all that is called religion, of all that is communicated from God to man. The natural knowledge of God is the product of reason. And if things be declared as the counsel of God's will and product of his pleasure, reason receives them ; the resolutions of his will for our further direction, are proposed and communicated to reason. And in both these ways we are *taught of God*. In the former we are *made* to know ; and in the latter we are called to be made partakers of God's counsel. By *the former* we know that God is, his nature, what he is : by *the latter* ; what God would have us to do, and what he enjoins as fit to be done by us, in order to our future happiness. So here you see the use of mind and understanding in the way
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of religion. God teaches us in his creation, in giving us such faculties ; he teaches us further, in the resolution of his will ; because he satisfies us in what he doth impose upon us.

Thirdly, I do then conclude and observe from hence, that there is no *invincible ignorance* in any part of the world, as to the great rights, the famous rights, the eminent rights ; and I will tell you what I mean by these, *viz.* That God is to be worshipped and adored ; that there is a difference between good and evil, upon a moral account ; that just and honest are universally to be performed ; that that which is upon a moral account filthy, is to be avoided. Every one that is in human nature and is come to the use of reason, knoweth, or may know this. Nature and reason, where violence is not offered, hath sense of these four things. We are wont to say of *positive* institutions and laws, there is no plea for the violation of them, after they are duly published ; now if no plea for positive institutions after publication, much less an apology for the violation of these laws, that are born laws, that are laws *suo jure*. Such as are founded in the principles of human nature, and necessary in themselves ; and not the arbitrary results of any will or power whatsoever. Such as are the laws of observance of God, righteousness to our neighbours, and sobriety as to ourselves. If a man varies from these laws, he contracts guilt to his conscience, and is condemned by the sense of his own mind. If this be not true, there is no certain foundation in the world for that which we call religion, or conscience.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, I observe that *reason* is so far from doing any disservice to christian faith, that it fits men to receive it. For man in the true use of his reason, knowing that he hath not performed his duty to God, and being sensible that he is short and hath failed; reason puts him upon deprecating God's displeasure, and to think that God, who is the first and chiefest good, will certainly be ready to commiserate the case of a finite creature that miscarried and doth repent and return to duty, and this is gospel; and this is that that *Jesus Christ* came into the world to confirm. Therefore the *use of reason in matters of religion* is so far from doing any harm to religion, from being prejudicial to any articles of faith, that it is the proper preparatory for men to look out to God; and taking up the bible, and finding that *God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself*, reason saith, *I did expect it, I did believe such a thing from the first and chiefest good; and now I am told it so, I am assured of it by the gospel.* Man in the true use of sober and impartial reason, knowing that he hath not performed his duty to God; is put upon laying out for God's pardon, in the way of the grace of the gospel. Man knows he is of limited perfection, he is not good enough to his own satisfaction: and therefore knowing that he hath failed, his reason leads him to look abroad, to look out for every good word that comes from the mouth of God: and when he reads in the bible, that *God will pardon sin*; that which he expected in the use of reason, he may be satisfied is true.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, and *lastly*, since the great things of religion and conscience are committed to reason to keep and secure, why should we think the reason of a man may not be trusted with those things that are of lesser moment? We need not doubt or question upon account of conscience, any thing that lies upon us to do, if there be no prohibition from God, (for which look into the scripture) if the thing be not in itself *irrational* or *absurd*. I say, provided there be no positive place of scripture that doth declare concerning God, where there is no positive resolution, we need not doubt in point of conscience, to do one way, or other; if we do not that that is *irrational* and *absurd*.

Our apostle hath asserted, and I think we have made it plainly appear; that *God is universally knowable*; both that he is, and what are his natural and essential perfections: yea, that he is *most knowable*, upon several accounts; so that all those that are impious and profane, are without all plea, apology, and excuse.

There is a natural sense of Deity in every rational soul; and this is fundamental to all religion; and this the apostle doth plainly resolve; *the eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made*; and this is an argument to an atheist, unanswerable; and a reason satisfactory to the highest understanding and most pure mind; to wit, from those operations of God in his creation and government of the world; which do far exceed mind and understanding in the most refined soul in the world, therefore mind and understanding,

understanding, cannot attribute these effects to any principle inferior to itself ; but to one highly transcendent : and if he doth so, he doth acknowledge God. There is none that have the use of reason, but either they know that there is a God, or else are ignorant through their own default. I say, concerning the whole world moral, either they know there is a higher agent, of more perfect intelligence than man, or they might have known it. If they are ignorant, they are ignorant through their own fault, either thro' the neglect of their own faculties, or thro' an inobservance of the great effects of God in the world ; which show and declare what he is : therefore nothing more inexcusable than ignorance of God, and disregard of him in the world : so that they are without excuse.

To pursue the argument a little further. The scripture doth thus represent the state of man's creation, that it is the proper employment of mind and understanding, to seek, search, and enquire after God, to act our faculties, *Acts xvii. 27. that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him.* God gave a man mind and understanding, to make enquiry after God, if possibly he might feel him ; feel him, that is, by a spiritual touch, when the mind is clear and free and undisturbed. God did never intend that reason and understanding in man should ever be adjudged to be a hewer of wood, or a drawer of water ; but for observance of God, attendance upon him, taking cognizance of him. This is that the wise man *Solomon* hath observed,

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served, *Pro. xx. 27. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord*; a place which upon this occasion I always observe. A candle is a thing first lighted and then lighting; so that mind and understanding is first made light, by divine influences; and then enlightens a man, in the use thereof, to find out God, and to follow after him in creation and providence. Therefore it is the depth of degeneracy, to be without God in the world, to have God far from our remembrance. And we find degeneracy is thus described in holy scripture. *Rom. iii. 18. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Eph. ii. 12. Without God in the world. Jer. xii. 2. God is far from their reins. And it is the fool's sense, that there is no God. Psal. xiv. 1. There is a natural and indelible sense of Deity, and consequently of religion, in the mind of man. And he that denies this, I do not know upon what any one can build an argument. It fairly lies before every man, when he useth his reason and understanding, to contemplate the various effects in the world, to find out an agent that is intelligent, and superior to mind and understanding in man. Aristotle he saith, * "that the heavens could not move, because they are inanimate beings, if they were not assisted by a superior and intelligent agent." And if I bring any man to acknowledge, that there is such an intelligent agent; then either it is God, or it doth acknowledge a superior; for if it depend upon a higher, I ascend still *ad infinitum*. There is therefore no plea nor a-*

* *Metaphys: lib. 2. c. 8. & De cælo l. 2. c. 2.*

pology for want of the sense of Deity : and this I will further make appear in these three particulars ;

First, No invincible *difficulty* lies upon any man, but that he may come to the cognizance of a God.

Secondly, *Invitations* every where about a man.

Thirdly, In the christian world there is God's instrument, the *bible*, which gives a man assurance and satisfaction.

First, No invincible *difficulty* lies upon any man, but that he may come to the cognizance of a God. Not the difficulty of *ignorance* ; for we are not *taught* this, but we are *made* to know there is a God. 2. There is no *impotency* ; for every one can use the parts and powers of nature, at least, when at age. 3. There is no foreign *impediment* ; for it is transacted *within* one's self ; not subject to the controul of any usurper, that may over-rule us, or take upon him power to dispose us. For it is an internal *elicit* act of the mind ; and an *elicit* act is exempt from all the world, from all power whatsoever ; and may be done by the mind, which is at liberty, when the person is under restraint. A man may have motion of mind toward God, tho' his body be in prison. So that unless you can keep him perpetually from himself, you cannot keep him from reflexion upon God, or from other internal acts. He said right, who said, " I am never less alone than when no body is with me ;" for when I am most alone, then am I in the cognizance of God, and contemplation of him. Yea, there may be motion of mind and understanding toward God, in any croud of company ; yea, a man may be at leisure to make acknowledgments

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ledgments to God, and to own him, and observe him, and to issue forth toward him, tho' entangled in business ; for the motion of the sun is not quicker than the motion of mind and understanding ; a man may take cognizance of God, and he that talks with him not perceive an interruption. If any one be devoid of all sense of Deity, I declare it is the malignity of the subject, upon a threefold account.

1. Because of the *nearness of God* to us ; God is every where by the effects of his wisdom, and by the fruits of his goodness ; and to us God is all in all, original, final, and the center of our souls. 2. Because of the *sagacity of our faculties*. And 3. Because of the nearness of *light of knowledge*. Upon these three accounts, every man, that is devoid of the sense of Deity, is in fault and culpable.

Secondly, There are *invitations* every where afforded us, to invite us to acts of acknowledgment, and taking cognizance of God. I shall make this appear in three particulars. 1. God's communications awaken to this : and what have we but by divine communication ? All we have and are, is by a voluntary communication from God. What have we that we receive not ? We are no where but receivers. God is every where first, and the great giver ; God is he that bestows upon us whatsoever we have ; all our enjoyments are the gifts of God ; and therefore these speak something to us, from whom they come. It is the natural sense of reasonable souls, *Lord lift upon us the light of thy countenance*, Psal. iv. 6. So that all the communications of God lead us unto him. 2. The very principles
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of man's make do incline him to God ; all mind and understanding tends to God ; all things move to their center, and God is the center of reasonable and immortal souls and spirits. It is not more certain that heavy things fall downwards, and light things fly upward, than that it is natural and proper for mind and understanding to move toward God. Our philosophers that never heard of the bible, this they acknowledged. It is as God's money : *Cæsar's* money was no more properly his, than mind and understanding in man is *God's* ; for it bears his impress. The soul of man, any ways by violence torn off from God, is like leaves fallen off from the trees, that pine, and fade, and wither away : but in God, who is their center, they have rest, perfection and quiet. 3. Things about us contribute objectively. If we consider the whole creation about us, they contribute by way of *object*, to God's glory ; for they have not ability to do it by way of *efficiency*. No voice in nature so loud, no language so easy to be understood : every herb, every plant imparts something of God. And this is the sense of the psalmist, when he saith, *the heavens declare the glory of God, &c. Psal. xix. 1.* that is, by way of object, because they do awaken the capable creatures ; for mind and understanding in man, is to see and observe the wisdom and power and goodness of God. For a man cannot take cognizance of the regular motion of the whole creation, a man cannot look abroad, but something of God offers itself, something or other sounds God in his ears, and declares his infinite wisdom, mighty power,

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er, and great goodness ; for this is the notion of goodness, to communicate itself.

Thirdly, To speak a little more home ; these two are general, and teach the whole creation ; now my third argument is only to the christian world. To the christian world, there is God's superadded instrument, *the scripture*, which contains matters of revelation from God ; whereby also the natural *notices* of God are awakened and enliven'd. The bible contains the revelation of his will, and the effect of his counsels ; these do further satisfy the christian world, both concerning the existence of God, and what he is : and then in the bible, there are these two things ; the consonancy of the things therein contained with the things of natural knowledge ; and the report there made of God, agreeable to what reason leads men to think. These promote highly a true and just sense and consideration of God : whereas one neglective of himself in the use of naturals, not refined in respect of morals, doth not favour the things of God, thinks nothing rightly concerning him : he is uncapable of revealed truth, if in contradiction to natural light, or wholly out of the use and exercise of it. And this is an argument to a philosopher ; so that the bible doth highly promote a just and due sense and consideration of God. Being disposed by the two former arguments, this book gives further assurance.

To sum up all. The language of our own souls within ; the impressions of the divine wisdom throughout the whole creation ; the objective acclamations of all creatures, carry us on strongly to the

the knowledge of God, to application to God. *All thy works praise thee, O Lord.* Holy scripture comes in pursuance of these, to repeat and reinforce them. So that he must of necessity be very dissolute and profligate, in respect of his life and manners, of a havocked conscience, of a stupid mind and confounded understanding; who being partaker of intellectual nature, intelligent by virtue of his faculties, living in the midst of so many *speaking arguments*, (for things *speak*) doth not spell God out, in the variety or curiosity of his creatures, nor understand the audible language of heaven and earth. Whatsoever man endued with mind and understanding, partaker of human nature, that hath no regard and apprehensions of God as the first and chiefest good, as the original of our beings, the center of our souls; our utmost end; he hath confounded his principles, lost himself in the world, sunk down into sensuality and brutishness, or else in a compromise with the devil; for he is departed from his nature, *so that they are without excuse.* God hath made himself so far knowable, both *that he is*, and *what he is*, by those great effects of creation and providence, that all that are partakers of human nature, and are devoid of sense of God, *are without excuse.*

Now I conclude with some few observations:

1. I take notice of the infinite *patience* of God, to endure such monsters, so degenerated from their make, as men of stupid minds, havocked consciences, and profligate lives, are. God hath *endured the contradiction of sinners*, from *Adam's fall*, to this hour; *Heb. xii. 3.*

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2. Then the business of the day of judgment is very easy on God's part, but very sad on degenerate mens part. For God's work is prepared to his hands : all sinners are self-condemned ; God doth but *actum agere*. But then sad on the impenitents part ; for they have nothing left within them to bear them up, the very reason of their minds is against them. Nothing is more inherent to the nature of man, than for a man to live up to the dictates of sober and impartial reason. Now if men do not so, when they come to consider, the very thoughts and sense of it will overbear them. I must needs tell the loose, profane world ; those who being harden'd by custom and practice, do controul grounds and principles of sober reason and judgment, thinking all to be lawful that others do, and the guise of the world an account of action ; pretending the doubtfulness and uncertainty of reason, from the several opinions of incompetent persons (which is the only defence and apology for exorbitant living, such credulous persons have ;) willing to believe what their lusts lead them to, and what they would fain have to be true ; I must tell them, that if ever they come to be awakened, to have serious thoughts, to reflect upon themselves ; comparing what they have done, with principles of severe and impartial reason, not born to gratify sense, or to comply with humour ; they will prove burdensome to their conscience, and to the sense of nature ; so that they will be confounded in themselves, ready to call on mountains and hills to fall upon them, and cover them from the face of their judge ; and

will be found speechless. And this is that that is the foundation of all inward darknes ; either not using the principles of our creation, or else abusing them, by complying with the corrupt guise of the world, or what mens own lusts incline them to.

3. I take notice of the greatness of the work of reconciliation. A man must be made whole in himself, or else he cannot be kept out of hell. Man cannot be at ease till all that he hath sinfully done, be undone ; till right judgment, which hath been violently forced, be renewed ; and regular life and conversation restor'd. Now these are the materials of regeneration. There is in regeneration, a transformation of the whole inward man; so far forth as he hath apostatized. For he must be brought to comply with the unchangeable laws of righteousness, goodness, and truth ; and to a right use of his faculties. All this must be done ; and this must be done by mental illumination, conviction, and satisfaction ; and by a man's giving consent, that all these things be done in him, and upon him. The scripture way of dealing with man, in matters of religion, is always by evidence of reason and argument. These three things must be : the sense of the soul must incline to God, must have a divine impression upon it, which will carry a man toward God ; the reason of the mind must be the same, and in reconciliation with the reason of things ; and severe and impartial reason govern and rule in life.

Religion, indeed, is openly contradicted by the licentious practices of such who take to themselves power and priviledge to do as they list : but it is misrepresented;

misrepresented, scandalized, made ridiculous and contemptible, by the fond imaginations, nauseous, fulsome principles of the superstitious : and I reckon that *what* hath not reason in it, or for it, if held out for religion, is *man's superstition*. Some things of this nature may be well meant, by those who are weak ; but it is not religion of *God's making* ; but we make ourselves slaves, to be under the power of it. — It is the excellency of religion, that it is highly reasonable, gives an account of itself to man's mind, and satisfies. *Truth* clears itself, and discloses its contrary *error*.

DISCOURSE LIX.

The unnatural Ingratitude of the Profane and Irreligious.

ROM. i. 21.

Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.

I Have formerly spoken to that which is fundamental to all religion and conscience ; I have given you an account from our apostle, in the former verse, of the natural knowledge of God : that is, that God in the moment of his creation, did make man capable of knowing him ; so as to know *that he is* ; and in some measure, to conceive *what he is*, and what are his essential perfections,

his wisdom, power, and goodness : upon which it follows, that men do grievously miscarry, are very short, do not answer the principles of God's creation, nor do that which is agreeable to their natures and make, if they do *not glorify God as God, neither are thankful to him.*

I will only take notice of two things in all the words of the chapter that follow ; that is,

I. The use and improvement the apostle makes of this natural knowledge of God, which he hath asserted ; and

II. The mischievous *effects* that follow upon mens gross neglect of this knowledge of God, of which they are capable.

I. The use and improvement of this principle, *that God is fairly knowable by the works of his creation*, if we awaken our faculties, if we call ourselves to consideration. And I think I have made it appear, that there is nothing more knowable than that there is a God : and that there is a peculiarity in mind and understanding in man to this purpose. Now this being considered, and here supposed, the apostle brings in a *charge* of a high nature : for he makes it an argument of conviction and self-condemnation, to all those that are dissolute, impious, and profane ; that men do not answer their natural knowledge of God ; that they knowing him, do not live in regard of him, have him not in reverence, do not obey him, love him, fear him, serve him, admire and adore him. And this will be the condemnation of the whole world : and this will be the article,

article, upon which the world will be examined at the day of judgment ; that men were *made to the knowledge of God*, and they took no notice of him, neither glorified him as God, neither were thankful.

But to follow the text.

First, Here is the fault, *not to glorify God, as God, neither to be thankful.*

Secondly, The conviction, that they *knowing* God, did it not. For nothing is more certain, than that *judgment should be the rule of action.* And the contrary, *knowing God*, and yet being inobservant of him, neglective of duty toward him, not to stand affected toward him, is the most unaccountable thing in the world ; because every man either hath or might have knowledge, that there is a God : nothing is more inherent to human nature, than sense of Deity. I cannot therefore do you better service, than first to give you an account of this failure and miscarriage : when men may be said, *not to glorify God, as God* : when they do not do that on their parts, that holds a proportion to the manifestation that is made of God to them : which account I will pick out of the several verses of this chapter, and give it you in five particulars. And the

First, Is, *living without God in the world.* Who-soever lives without God in the world, doth *not glorify God, as God* : for he performs no duty to him, takes no notice of him in the world, grossly neglects him, making no acknowledgment of him, hath no sense of his dependence upon God. This you have in the 28th verse, *they did not like to retain God in their*

their knowledge : which doth import a contrary disposition, and an averſation to God. Now this is apparently below man's make, and ſhort of the capacity of human nature, and therefore to be accounted ſottiſhneſs, ſtupidity, and impotency, or ſinking below a man's ſpecies. For as I have told you, that which is the excellency of mind and underſtanding is a peculiar faculty appropriated to God : it is that which is its natural virtue, its peculiar and proper employment, to make ſearch and enquiry after God, to be employed about him, to tender homage and ſervice and obſervance to him. Whoſoever therefore lives *without God in the world*, he doth not do a manly act, mind and underſtanding in him are loſt. — To live without God in the world therefore, is not to *glorify God, as God*.

Secondly, *They glorify him not as God, that entertain baſe thoughts, and have unworthy apprehenſions of God* ; attributing that to him, which is much fruier of the contrary and moſt degenerate nature ; and which is not at all becoming the firſt and chief-eſt goodneſs (and ſo we underſtand God to be ;) thinking of him as an enemy, whereas he hates nothing that he hath made. The beſt notion that you can have of God is, that he is *good* ; that *he hateth nothing that he hath made* ; and *that he would not have any to periſh*. The Pſalmiſt ſaith, *he is good to all, his tender mercies are over all his works*, Pſal. cxlv. 9. And it is an eminent ſaying of Jeſus the ſon of Syrac ; the world is governed by a mild and a gentle ſpirit that is benign and loving to mankind. And were it not ſo, I do not ſee how we ſhould
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live in the world. 'Tis not to *glorify God*, to think that God hath imposed upon himself a law, or hath any way limited or disabled himself at any time, to compassionate any compassionate case; this is an unworthy thought of the first and chiefest good. To think that he is not most perfectly free in all futurity of time, to do that which is just and and fit, merciful and gracious, friendly, benign and kind, becoming infinite goodness, suitable to the relation he stands in to his creatures, is to make him less good than earthly parents. Two things a man would abhor to have in his thoughts concerning God; that God by power can do that that is not right; or that by any priviledge, his kindness and tenderneſs to his creatures, may be abated; as in particular, not to pardon ſin to a finite and fallible creature upon his repentance, and reformation. It is as certainly true of God, as any thing that can be ſaid of him; that God hath laid a foundation of repentance; that repentance is available, and ſhall certainly take place; that repentance doth alter the caſe, and ſhall alter the ſinner's condition. To ſay that of God that doth any way diſcountenance the application of his creatures to him, in any caſe of miſery and neceſſity, is *not to glorify God, as God*. But to demonſtrate this with the greateſt clearneſs, this I ſuperadd, that *God is known to us, by goodneſs*: and there is no true notion of God, unleſs the full form, eſſence and ſubſtance of good be fully in it: for there is no abſolute perfection but in conjunction with goodneſs: it is a divine work, to do good, and to gratify; not to make havock, and to ſpoil: wherefore

wherefore God magnifies his mercy, and goodness, and righteousness, his fair and compassionate and equal dealing, above all other his names. But those that are of malignant, spiteful, envious naughty dispositions, they think it is the excellency of God to be revengeful, and to drive designs of ill upon his creatures. The Psalmist hath observed it in *Psal. l. 21. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.* And, really, do we find men of narrow spirits, that are ready to malign the good of their neighbour; you may be confident what apprehensions they have of God: they have unworthy suppositions concerning God, rendering him as an enemy to human nature: and it is a thousand to one but in these mens divinity, the excellency of the Deity is *sovereignty* to ruin a great part of his creation, to show his power, and to do what he would. But nothing is more certain, than that infinite goodness doth toward the whole creation, what is to the full worthy infinite goodness to do. Nothing more certain than that God doth answer the relation he stands in to his creation. And where we see indulgency of fathers, that can compassionate their children; that can deny themselves, that can undo themselves, for their children; I account this kindness in them, but a participation from God; this goodness of disposition in them, is but a communication from God, a resemblance of his affection to his creatures, in some measure: for is there any thing of perfection in all the world that doth not derive from him, who is *the first and chiefest good.* ?
 ——— When you have done all you can, the best notion

notion you can have of Deity is *goodness*. God and good are best known by one another. He that came from God, came *to seek and to save*. It is therefore not a divine work, to make havock and spoil. —

The first thing in religion is to have *true suppositions*, in one's mind, concerning God ; and if any man be wrong in this, he will mistake throughout : if we have not right suppositions in our minds concerning God, we may *dread and fear* him, as an enemy, but not *love* him ; we shall withdraw from him, leave him, yea hate him, and seek for happiness somewhere else. But

Thirdly, For men to assume to themselves power and authority to assign a *mode* of divine worship : to make some material thing, either a representation of God to us, or exhibitivè of his influence, to make an *instrument* in divine worship, without God's warrant, or which is not accountable in the way of reason ; this is *not to glorify God, as God* ; for this is to limit him, and confine him. This you have in the two following verses. v. 23. *Changing the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, &c.* and v. 25. *Changing the truth of God into a lie, and worshipping the creature above the creator* : which I choose rather to translate ; *worshipping the creature in conjunction with the creator* : for never was there such a thing in the world, as worshipping the creature above the creator ; but worshipping the creature in conjunction with the creator : and this fits the idolatry both of the *Gentile* world, and of the *Jews*, and is continued in the *Romish church* to this day, in their use of images.

This

This hath been done presumptuously in the *heathen* world. And this is that which God took so much offence at in the *Jewish* state. And there is the same thing in the use of the *Roman* worship. In former times God did make some material things a testimony of himself; as the temple was the place of *Shecinah* or divine habitation. There should be no *Shecinah*, but by divine assignation. God may do what he pleases; but for us to take upon us, is to *change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image*, &c. and to turn the truth of God into a lie; and serve the creature more than the creator. This the *Israelites* did; for, when they made a calf, which though the text calls so in contempt, it was the resemblance of an angel, they would have something that should make divine representation, that should be to them as *Moses* was. And this is also in popish-church images. Can any one think the *Jews* were so stupid and sottish, as to think that it was the God that made heaven and earth, that they made with their hands, or that what they made did make them; or that their calf brought them out of *Egypt*? The calf was *loco Mosi, non Dei*. And it is not reasonable to imagine the heathen world did otherwise. But the *idolatry* of the world hath been about the *medium of worship*, not about the object of worship. The idolatry of the world hath been this, without God's warrant or the true dictates of impartial reason, to *confine the Deity* to be contained in some material thing, or to raise some material thing to *distribute divine influence*: and this is that that is prohibited in the second commandment,

mandment, the reason of which is moral and perpetual. And this is plain in the text, and over and over again in this chapter : and this is plainly in the language of these words, *not to glorify God, as God.*

Fourthly, Men do not glorify God, when they do degenerate into the clean contrary nature, degenerating into all sorts of naughtiness, living in contradiction to the nature of God, and his laws, the rules of righteousness, and dictates of reason : and this is plainly in the 29th, 30th, and 31st. *Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, back-biters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventers of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.* They that are thus, put themselves into an incapacity to glorify God, as God : for nothing is more inherent to the nature of man, nothing more natural to him, nothing more expected by God, than that man do observe, and govern himself by the law of his nature, and the dictates of right reason ; according to the nature of God, according to the principles of righteousness, and according to the reason of things. These are laws which are not controulable ; and whosoever dasheth himself against these laws, or is in contradiction to them, he doth kindle in himself the fewel of *Tophet* burning ; which can never be put out, unless there be repentance and reformation. For what have we to offer unto God ? We have nothing to give to God ; but herein we glorify him, when we are *like him*, when we write

write after God's copy, when we endeavour to be *that* in our measure and proportion that God is in his height, excellency and fulness. For this is the sum of religion, when we imitate that which we worship. If *this* be, to adore him, to think that all the ways of God are ways of truth, righteousness, and goodness; then it is *religion* in us to bring forth the fruits of truth, righteousness and goodness. And if we are under the divine influence, then the fruit of the spirit is in us, in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. This is in some measure to exhibit God, by imitating him; and this is the true explication of *God's doing all for his own glory*, when he doth, in the government of the world take care that righteousness, goodness, and truth, have a universal empire: and we do that that is for the glory of God, when we do that that is right, and good, and just, and fit, and are subordinate in our sphere to the acts of God in the government of the world. It is too narrow and childish a conceit, to think that God doth all for his own glory, as we do for ourselves. But God takes care that in the whole creation, truth and righteousness, and justice and equity take place: and this is the genuine explication of *God's doing all for himself*: not that it is possible for God to receive any thing, either from man or angel. So this is to glorify God, to resemble him, and to be that in our proportion, which he is in fulness. We glorify God, therefore, in the fullest and highest measure, when we do so adore the divine perfections, and are so taken with them, that we affect an imitation of them, and a participation,

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pation, according to our capacity ; and when this is final and ultimate in us. Therefore they do not *glorify him as God*, who do not set themselves in a way of subordination to God, to act for his glory ; and, in their places and spheres of action, do not serve these glorious ends of goodness, righteousness and truth. None dishonour God more than those, who by degeneracy pass into a nature contrary to his ; that do such actions, that God doth set himself to discountenance in the world. Let us therefore rectify our apprehensions in this great truth, of *God's doing all for himself* : that is, God doth take care that those things that are according to his nature, and according to his mind and will, may be done in the world : and whosoever do not endeavour to have their nature reconciled to these laws, these men do not glorify God as God. No sort of sacrifice is acceptable to God, where naughtiness is in the heart, and wickedness in the life, and practice : the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.

Fifthly, and lastly, Which I take from the next words, *being unthankful* ; to be devoid of sense of God's goodness and kindness, in the many fruits of his love and faithfulness to us, this is not to *glorify God*. And truly had I said nothing, now I should have said enough. What have we that we have not received ? Can we sacrifice to God of any thing that is our own ? ——— But this is our own, to be *thankful*. To have worthy thoughts of God, and to be well affected toward him, is the sum of our devotion : and I look upon this to be an explication of the first part of the verse. For he that is truly
thankful

thankful to God, will certainly *glorify him as God* ; for since we are so much beholden to him ; since we owe so much to divine goodness and kindness, and are so unable to make a recompence ; there is all the reason in the world, we should be sensible, and make due acknowledgments. And indeed thankfulness and obedience are our truest sacrifices. And these are acceptable to God, and available on our behalf, *Psal. l. 23. Whoso offereth praise glorifies me* ; otherwise oblations are insignificant. Therefore see *Isa. lxvi. 3, 4.* There things of divine institution, and choice things, are represented as things most infamous and abominable. How comes this to pass ? Because *they have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their own abominations.* —So that it is *thankfulness* and *obedience*, that are things of a nature that cannot be corrupted ; *sacrifice* and *things external*, may be vitiated and corrupted ; they may be in an ill conjunction ; and they will be looked upon as *bribes* to satisfy God for immorality. — That God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, cannot be pleased with any thing that may pretend by way of recompence, for any impure, filthy, immoral acts. So *Isa. i. 11, 12, 13. &c.* these things were instituted by God, and required under great penalties. What work doth this prophet make to cry down all religion among them ? if he lived in our days, he would cry down a great deal of formality ; yea things really good, if in conjunction with immorality. — If men be immoral, in any way whatsoever ; if they consent to any iniquity ; if they allow themselves in any evil practice ; if they admit

admit any such thing, it doth spoil all their religion.

—— We may conclude concerning all our devotions, and all those things that are but *the ministries and instruments of piety*, (which are good in their right use ;) if they are performed to be gloried in; to be boasted of ; it is but *as magnifying the name of God, and not departing from iniquity* : if there be any act of unrighteousness ; it doth not only blemish, but mar and spoil all. And is it not plainly said, *the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord* ? Prov. xv. 8. as also *Micah* vi. 6, 7, 8. Wherefore, thankfulness and obedience, *that is the true sacrifice, that is what is worthy of the creature to the creator, and that which God will certainly accept.* But it is most certain, that the zeal of any institution, though it be divine institution; is to God unacceptable, if in conjunction with immorality.

Thanksgiving is an eminent piece of that worship we call imploration, or *invocation of God*.

Three things are proper *prayer-matter*; (and if men confine themselves to these; keep to proper prayer-matter, and avoid unnecessary repetitions ; none can be too long : but if men take liberty in prayer, to declare, and to tell God stories ; then I do not know when, or where it will end :)

1st, Confession of sin, with desire of pardon. And as for that ; if men live christian lives, they will not have the same sins to confess the second time : for christian religion is not to sin and pray, and pray and sin. You may indeed acknowledge you have done it before ; but to confess it, as practised again and

and again; this doth declare that you are not religious, but profane.

2dly, *Acknowledgment of the perfections of the divine being; of his superiority, and of our dependence upon God: with a sense of our insufficiency and weakness, and desire of divine grace, influence, and assistance.*

This is always to be in prayer; and this is a great matter of prayer: because tho' we are in a growing condition; yet we may say, in this state, that we have not attained. Therefore to come to God in sense of our insufficiency, and of the necessity of God's influencing and co-operating grace; this is work for us every day.

3dly, *Resentments of God's goodness and faithfulness to us, and thankful apprehensions and expressions of this.* And whatsoever is not comprehended in, or referred to in *these*, is heterogenous to prayer, is exorbitant, and is not prayer.—By the two former, we daily fetch from God; we obtain pardon of sin through Christ, we obtain guidance, aid, and assistance.—By the last, (which is our resentment and thankfulness) by this only we bring to God; and this is our only return.

A grateful sense, grateful resentments and apprehensions of the various effects of the divine providence over us, for averting of evils from us, and conferring of good upon us, as they express our ingenuity of spirit towards God; so they are the best things we have in our hands to bring to God, the best returns to God.—Galen, the famous physician, having occasion to observe the curiosity that is in the make of man's body, doth make a hymn

to

to God. " This (says he) is the truest worship of
" God the creator ; and this is far more accept-
" able, and better in itself, than if I were able to
" bring a thousand sacrifices, or should offer the
" choicest incense and perfumes ; if I myself be
" sensible, acknowledge, and upon occasion exhi-
" bite and represent the *power* of the creator, the
" *wisdom* of the creator, and his *goodness* : his *pow-*
" *er* and *wisdom*, for that he hath contrived, in
" mode and figure, so many fitnesses ; and his *good-*
" *ness*, in that he hath so fully communicated him-
" self, for what are creatures, but divine commu-
" nications ? And this do I understand to be the
" best worship of God, and transcendent of that sa-
" crifice which may consist of hecatombs of beasts,
" and of the purest incense."

This one thing we have, and we have but this
one thing, which we may call *our own* ; I mean the
consent of our minds ; and that must be *ours*, or else
it is not *our consent* ; it is not what it is, unless it be
our own. God hath made us to have one thing
that we may call our own ; and yet we must ac-
knowledge it is the grace of God with us, that it is
our own, by divine concurrence. Now, that we
may be thankful, let us by our own voluntary act,
addict and determine ourselves to God, and make
him ours. Let us afford him the consent of our
minds, that is, make him our delight and choice,
take pleasure, content and satisfaction in him. This
is the fullest and highest way of thankfulness to God
that we are capable of ; out of sense of his excel-
lency and goodness, to reckon all our happiness to

consist in our enjoyment of him, in our being and living in communion and acquaintance with him. So that we have wherewithal to sacrifice to God; we have the consent of our minds. We have this from God, to be *our own act*. We may make him our choice, breath after interest in him, and communion with him. This is the best expression of thankfulness; and this is the christian's free-will offering.—— Thus I have made explication of unthankfulness. We owe thankfulness to God, because we live by his influence. It is most natural to make acknowledgment, and to make thankful returns to God.

Thus have I given you an account of this great *failure*, and grand miscarriage, *they glorified not God as God, neither were thankful*. Now I proceed to the *second* thing I observed at first, the argument of conviction. Their accusation is, that they did not glorify God as God; and were unthankful. The argument of conviction, and the aggravation of the fault, is, because God made them capable of knowing that God is, and that willingly and knowingly they were thus wanting, and so did transgress. That person is altogether inexcusable, and self-condemned, who knowing that he hath a creator that is of infinite power, goodness and wisdom; and having sense and knowledge that there is a God, (as God hath *made* man to have) doth not adore him, fulfil his will, is not observant of him, not affected toward him, doth not rejoice, and delight in him. So that irreligion is the most unnatural thing in the world. Man knowing that he hath a creator, of
infinite

infinite wisdom, power, and goodness ; he doth not regard him, obey him, love him, choose him and delight in him : and this is that that aggravates it, upon a four-fold account.

First, Truth is a *seminal principle*, with which the mind of man being impregnated, ought to bring forth ; and in this case there should be neither barrenness nor abortions : for rational nature is as sufficient and proportionable to its effects, as any vital principle besides in the world. We should cry out a prodigy and a monster, if natural principles should not produce their effects. I testify, that when God made a rational creature, he made a creature more proportionable to the effects of reason, and so to religion, than when he made any natural principle in the world : and if a man do not walk up to the principle of reason, he is a monster. If hurting a woman with child, so as mischief followeth, be so punishable, *Exod. xxi. 23.* what is this case of destroying the seed of God, in mens minds ; for so it is called, *1 John iii. 9.* Seed is accounted lost, when being sown in the ground it never comes up ; so are notions of things in minds, in respect of their acts and virtues. Truth received into the mind by knowledge, is to the soul, as leaven put into the meal, which presently leavens the whole lump. It is as natural that will should follow, as that understanding should go first. Truth in the understanding without practice, is God's talent wrapped up in a napkin. We first receive from God by mental illumination ; then *judgment passes into victory*, *Mat. xii. 20.* God enlightens the

world by *the sun*, in reference to actions of several creatures : he doth illuminate the intellectual world of spirits, viz. angels and souls, by *the influence and communication of himself*, not to less purpose sure, than in order to act. Every one, so far as he knows or may know, hath a talent committed to his trust ; God doth expect use and improvement. No such argument of conviction, as for men *not to be that they know they ought to be ; or not to do that, they know they should*. Wheresoever God, who is the father of light and God of truth, sends his rays and beams into the souls of men ; there he expects the mind should be purified as well as enlightened : and in case of failure, he will severely challenge the impediment.

Secondly, The imprisoning and controuling of truth, is an action of the highest injury and offence to God, that a man can commit ; beyond what we can easily imagine. For whosoever hath received any thing from God by mental illumination, if he doth not pursue it to the refinement of his spirit, he doth *counterwork* God. He who stifles or gets against his knowledge, any notion of his mind, doth in effect give a check to God's working in him, and dischargeth God from all further action. For it is declared, that God *works in us, to will and to do*, Eph. ii. 13. Now for us, thus to do, is to reject him, where we most find him and feel him ; and to strike at the very image of God within ourselves. And in this case, it is wisdom's complaint, *Prov. i. 24, 30. I have stretched out my hands, I have invited you, I have called upon you ; and you would none of*

of my counsel. This is that that will sink men into ruin at the great day, that God on his part was not wanting, but men were wilful. This is condemnation, that we know better, than either we are or do. Now what would not this naughty disposition of heart against God carry men out to, if they had any power and opportunity against God? He that hath spite against that of God that is within him, would not he rise up against God himself, if he had power and opportunity? For, doth it not declare a displacency and antipathy against God, for man to run from that in himself, which immediately comes from God, bears his image, hath his stamp upon it. Where the truth of God is inwardly disgusted, or disrelished, so as not to be concocted and turned into spiritual nourishment, is not there an exasperated and implacable spirit against God himself?

Thirdly, Truth is *connatural* to a man's soul; the light is not more *connatural* to our bodily eyes. Truth is as natural to man's soul, as light to the sun. And truth in conjunction with a man's mind doth become the temper of a man's mind, and establisheth a complexion, a constitution; and therefore ought to be kindly used. What health and strength are to the body, that truth is to the soul, to the mind and understanding; the former makes men strong and vigorous, bodily active; the latter clears the sight, and cures all the infirmities of the mind. What obstructions are in the body, which are mischievous to operations of nature; that violent detentions of notices and principles of action, or contradictions to the reason of the mind, are in

the intellectual life. If what we eat and drink be not first subdued by the power of nature, and then conveyed to the several parts of the body for their sustenance and nourishment, it becomes matter of disease and sickness. Knowledge is the food of the soul, the mind's sustenance and nutriment ; and therefore is not ultimately to rest in knowledge, in understanding, but in will and affections ; should become goodness ; that that is knowledge in the mind and understanding, should in conversation and actions of life produce obedience. For we begin by knowledge, and end in practice : and indeed truth, and that that follows upon truth, is the self-same thing materially, only called by several denominations in respect to different habitudes and distinct functions and purposes ; as the sea which is one and the same, is one where called the *Mediterranean*, in another place the *German ocean*, and the like. Truth is knowledge in respect of the understanding, goodness in a man's heart, &c. The understanding is not finally enlightened for itself ; but is as the eyes which receive light for the use and service, guidance, and direction of the body. Again the stomach in the body natural receives all, but it retains not upon its own account ; it receives to prepare, and then to diffuse prepared matter to the other parts of the body. Just so the understanding receives things, and discusses them ; but then they are to have their influence upon life and practice, in intellectual nature. First, the understanding satisfies itself in the reason of things, then the will gives consent, and the notion forthwith becomes matter

matter of action, life, and practice. The *understanding* in the perfection of knowledge, and the *will* not in a disposition of goodness, makes no harmony, but are vastly disproportionable. The understanding, as it comes into the world, the philosophers tell us, is as *rasa tabula*, or a *white sheet of paper*, whereon nothing is writ ; but when it doth receive notions of truth, it is then beautified with ornaments beyond the beauty of *Solomon in all his glory* ; or, as our Saviour saith, the transcendent comeliness of the lilly ; such is the understanding when it is illuminated : truth, it is glory, light and beauty to the soul ; it makes the face of the soul to shine and to appear fair and beautiful. It is the soul's companion, with which she doth associate herself with great complacency and delight. But on the contrary, as one shut up in a dungeon of darkness and nastiness, so is one who is in a state of ignorance, or hath his mind depraved by vice. Ignorance and vice stupify and deaden the mind. There are four mischiefs from *darkness*. *First*, It hinders motion : no man knows where to put his foot next, when in the dark. *Secondly*, It puts men in danger of falls, and knocks. *Thirdly*, It spoils any man's modesty : *no man blusheth in the dark*. *Fourthly*, It makes men slavish and fearful. But light hath all contrary advantages ; it *directs* a man in his way ; it gives a man *security*, for it discovers any thing that is dangerous ; it maintains the mind's *modesty* and ingenuity : and then they go on *confidently* that know the way, they know the ground they stand upon. Now light is not more natural to our bodily eyes, than truth is

to

to our souls. There is nothing doth make any thing in this material world so deformed, as ignorance and vice do deprave and dishonour the intellectual nature. By this men from men do differ, as God doth differ from the devil. For he that is fottishly ignorant, or depraved by vice, is an apostate, sinks below himself, hath deformed himself, and is become truly diabolical.

Fourthly, As it is the most unsafe, so it is the most *uneasy* condition, to any person to know, and not to do; to know, and not to be; to have judgment of right, and conscience of iniquity. I fear no worse hell in the world to come. And were I to tell men what is hell, on this side hell, I should after that manner describe it. A man hath not a sovereignty over his judgment; but he must judge and believe where he sees cause and reason. *If I can shew a man a reason, and an argument, I will convince his judgment against his will*, a refractory will, exorbitant lusts, and strong passions and affections, are unruly things under the single command of judgment: men were as good to be exposed to the fury of wild horses. *Elibu* in the book of *Job* expresses to the life this notion, how the notions of a man's mind do command and over rule him, elevate and transport, *Job xxxii. 18. I am full of matter* (saith he) *the spirit within me constraineth me. Behold my belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak that I may be refreshed, I will open my lips and answer.* Were it in a man's power, to believe as he would, he would be too hard for the greatest punishment that God can

can lay upon him : but it is not within a man's power to believe as he will. Men may by horrid practices, provoke God to leave them, and give them up to a reprobate sense, and to their own hearts lusts : but till men come to that, they are greatly unquiet, and uneasy. They that are sinners, we know not their inward perplexities : we little think how little true self-enjoyment they have. The hollow earth inclosing wind or air without vent, is as easily kept from the motion of trepidation or earthquakes, as the guilty conscience from anxiety and confusion. It is as easy for a man to carry fire in his bosom, and not to be burnt, as to offer violence to truth within one's self, and not to be in a state of self-condemnation.

And this for the account of the argument of *conviction*. I shall proceed in the next, to shew how it comes to pass that such a thing that is so horrid and unnatural, is found in the common-wealth of mankind, when as there is nothing of this deformity in all inferior natures.

DIS-

DISCOURSE LX.

The unnatural Ingratitude of the Profane and Irreligious,

ROM. i. 21.

Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.

I Have given you an explication of this form of words, and have made some explication of this *thankfulness*; which is a duty to God, wherein we express ourselves most naturally. For our truest notion of God is, that he is the *first and chiefest good*: and because we are by his communication, and live by his influence, therefore it is most natural for man to make returns. Now here is the aggravation, if men *do not glorify God*, they do it *knowingly*; man knowing that he hath a creator of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness; he doth not regard him, obey him, love him, choose him, delight in him; and this I have made appear in these particulars. *First*, Because truth is a seminal principle; rational natures are far more sufficient for things of reason, than inferior natures to their effects. *Secondly*, Because the *imprisoning of truth* is an action of the highest offence to God, that a man can possibly commit. *Thirdly*, Truth is connatural to a man's soul; so that truth being in conjunction with a
man's

man's mind, establisheth a constitution there. And *Fourthly*, As it is the most unsafe, so it is the most *uneasy* to any person whatsoever ; to know and not to be ; to know and not to do. But for this I refer you to what I have said more at large.

The next thing I promised, is to make enquiry, since such a thing is so deformed and ugly, so horrid and monstrous, so unnatural and violent : *how comes it to pass*, that such a thing is found in the common-wealth of mankind, who is made and constituted by God the governour of this world ? whereas there is nothing of this deformity in all inferior natures : but all inferior nature keeps its order.—To give an account of this in four particulars.

First, The least that is to be said in the case is this, a great part of men live in a hurry, and are seldom at *leisure* to consider or attend. 'Tis a common saying, *haste makes waste* : many would do better, if they did but stay and advise ; but in haste they do what is next. There are avocations, distractions, and other employments, that make men *of no ability* as to the judgment or discerning of truth : for 'tis a true maxim, *a man's parts and wit is where 'tis used and employed*. A neglected faculty may shrivel up to nothing : but, to be nobly and generously employed, and to use the faculties of God's creation in us, according to the intention for which they were given ; *this* is both conservative to our nature, and agreeable to truth. We give too little attendance to truth, entertain it too slightly, to have it at command. We live in a fleshly and worldly spirit, and at the world's call ; hurried on by every lust ;
being

being distempered and disaffected *within*, disturbed and interrupted *from without*. We are not at leisure to attend upon truth, to receive it, to obey it, — Men drudge in the world, debase their faculties, make their intellectual faculties very *Gibeonites*; employ them about base, mean, and worldly employments; they are not in a disposition to receive and entertain truth. Men have abused themselves; brought themselves by unnatural practice into an unnatural state; so *they* disgust and disrelish truth. Men give themselves up to worldly drudgery, the mean avocations and distractions of the world; so they are never at leisure to mind these things. And no man is valuable, sufficient, or competent to give a judgment, to make a report, wherein he is not exercised, wherein he is not greatly considerative. — Man, unless he sometimes take himself out of the world by self-reflexion and retirement, he will be little *himself* in the world, and in danger of losing himself. He will have very poor enjoyment of himself, and little use of his powers and faculties, especially as to spiritual acts, wherein he is *most concerned*, and *most perfected*. — This is our temptation, and hereby we come to be deceived; because things *severally* considered, are within the compass of lawful employment; therefore we little doubt or fear: whereas *altogether* they rob us of ourselves, and snatch us from what is *main* and *principal*. We are apt to be troubled about many things, while we omit the *one thing* necessary. Men of any *sort* of religion think it necessary to observe the difference of good and evil; and therefore they will

will not be employed in that which is not *honest* to be done. But there is something further : let men consider, that the things severally may be matters of lawful employment, yet too many of them croud- ed together may snatch a man away from himself and the service of God, and keep him from attend- ing upon God ; by which he may be happy. There- fore we should not too much *charge* ourselves, or be over *busy* in the world. Therefore *the Lord's day* is of very great use and advantage to us ; it does us this courtesy, to stave company and business off, that so we may be at leisure to think of God, and to perform acts of worship and devotion toward him. If we have good minds, our safety for eternity is of such consequence and importance, that we should think it highly necessary, that there should be an interposure of calm and quiet. It is very unsafe for eternity, to go out of the world in a hurry and con- fusion. Be not always in business, and too much in company, but sometimes retired, to look inward and to think of God. This is the *first* account I give you, how it comes to pass that men do not pursue their knowledge to practice.

Secondly, Men are apt, in the first place to save themselves *harmless* in this hurtful and dangerous world. It was St. *Peter's* advice, master favour thy- self, *Mat. xvi. 22. Be it far from thee, Lord ; this shall not be unto thee ;* who might have undone him- self, and all the world besides, if his counsel had been followed. A very great man of our nation * hath affirmed, that it is dangerous to follow history

* Sir *W. Raleigh*

too close at the heels ; and it is so in the case, he that follows truth close at the heels, may chance to have his teeth struck out. As the world may go ; to hold forth truth impartially, and severely, to keep to the practice of it, may prove the difficultest and costliest service. Truth may carry us into contests where *other mens* principles clash and interfere with *ours*. For truth allows not base compliance with fancy, lust, will, humour ; but requires us to keep in the way, and to walk in it, with all simplicity, integrity, sincerity, plainness, and open-heartedness. We must neither desert nor betray truth, to expedite ourselves out of difficulties, or to open to ourselves a way to escape. But a man must walk in his integrity through the world, and must maintain his truth and uprightness as *Job* did his righteousness, so that by-standers may rectify themselves by comparing themselves with him ; and so find out, how much they have departed from rectitude. *Plutarch* distinguisheth between a *friend* and a *flatterer*. “ The former stands as steady as an oak and he doth not at all yield to humour, will or fancy ; so that the other, when he returns from his exorbitancy, by comparing himself, and finding where he left him, may know how far he hath departed from his integrity. Whereas, the *flatterer* accommodates himself to humour and fancy ; applauds all deeds and sayings ; will do every thing to gratify ; and will admire whatever is said : but a true friend hath truth for a rule to his life and spirit.” But as the world goes, a man of impartial truth and uprightness shall be laid aside, as not conversible,

conversible, but as morose and cynical. — But here I superadd, for explication, that all that I have said of *adhering to truth*, is to be understood of the *undoubted principles of piety, sobriety and righteousness*: for, saving in *these* cases; to please every body, to make the best of any body, to give every one satisfaction, to go as far as you can with men; to live in an universal reconciliation, if it be possible, with the whole creation of God; this is *evangelical and divine*. This is not to be limited, but with conscience to the great rights of *sobriety, temperance and justice*. For all civility, affability, and courtesy, all expressions of modesty, all effects of love and universal good-will, are evangelical and highly divine; *Rom. xii. 10, 13, 17. 1 Pet. iii. 8.*

Thirdly, Men gratify their senses; steep themselves in worldly delights and pleasures. Sensuality makes the *palate* of the soul so dull and gross, that it cannot perceive that which is sincere and true, and judicious. That that is sincere and true wisdom is not in the way of *Epicurism*, but in the way of *sobriety, righteousness and temperance*. For, knowledge (which is an intellectual dainty) will not be relished, till the soul be purified by abstinence, by mortification, by abstraction from gross matter, and by separation from sense; *1 Tim. v. 6. Jam. v. 5. 2 Pet. ii. 13. 2 Tim. iii. 4. Tit. iii. 3. Heb. xi. 25.* These places represent the state, when men become brutish and sottish, and fall in the species of intelligent agents; go downward; grow less, by steeping themselves in worldly, brutish and carnal pleasures. The *sensualist* is no capable recipient, nor meet

meet discerners of divine and spiritual truth.

Fourthly, By long abuse of themselves, men come into a temper that is wholly unnatural to truth. He that doth evil, hates the light; comes not to it, lest his deeds be reproved. 'Tis a sad representation in Isaiah, Isa. vi. 9, 10. Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed. All desperate cases refer to this: you have it six times referred to in the new testament, *Mat. xiii. 14. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26.* and St. Paul refers to it in *Rom. xi. 8.* This is most certain, universally; *we have ourselves, as we use ourselves.* He that doth accustom himself to divine meditation and contemplation, and to thoughts of God, raises his soul, and doth daily more and more ennoble his faculties, but he that lives wickedly, that wholly lives downward, the longer he lives, the more limited and confined his soul will be. Every man is, for his intellectuals, and for his principles, according as he doth accustom himself, according as he is in use. *Sui cuique mores fingunt fortunam.* This is most true of internal endowments as well as of other things. No man knows what he may be brought unto, by ill use, custom and practice. Innocence is a safe-guard, and gives protection. The first base act is against the hair, is a force to a man's self: and, as Saul forced himself to offer sacrifice; so the sinner, at first, forces himself,

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he doth it, at first, with dissatisfaction, he apprehends he doth himself wrong. A man that hath been brought up virtuously, ingenuously, and hath maintain'd the tenderness of his soul, and his innocency; he will stick at a base proposal, and abhor it. Had many men imagined, when they began, how far they should have gone on, where sin would have carried them; they would have considered better of it. Innocence is a great protection; but the breaking in of sin, is like a torrent of water; which is easily stopt, before the way over the banks be found: but if once it hath found the way over, it bears all before it. There is a modesty belongs to our nature, till a man hath prostituted it: but when once a man hath done a base act, he hath lost that which would restrain him. Therefore, we observe that no man at the first is the worst, that no man comes to be outrageously bad, all on the sudden; but he brings himself to it, by havocking conscience, by confounding his principles, and putting away all the modesty and ingenuity of his nature. In this case (which is the worst of cases) I am now at the highest degeneracy incident to human nature. But if this be any man's case, this must be the recovery; there must be a restoration by regeneration, that the faculties of the soul may be restored to their proper operations and functions: and so by continuance in some good exercise, they may hope by repentance to be brought back again to some discerning of good and evil. For repentance is for recovery; and this is the only way. We do not know the length of God's patience; he hath forgiven great sinners:

they therefore that have thus abused themselves, and have wrought out the modesty of their natures, by violent use, ill custom and practice ; and wrought themselves into an unnatural state ; by entering upon, and continuance in some good exercise, let them hope by repentance to be brought back again to some discerning of good and evil : and this is the only way for their recovery.

Thus have I shewed you *how it comes to pass*, that men do live so unanswerably to their knowledge, do that that is so unnatural, as not to comply in matters of knowledge, than which a man cannot do an action of greater force against himself, and his natural principles. I now come to make four *inferences* upon the whole.

In the *first* place, then we see the *course of this world* ; and by it, we may easily *foresee* the state of men in the other *world*. For let men but answer me in these three points. *First*, Can they look God in the face hereafter with any comfort, who here liked not to retain the knowledge of God in their minds? Let a man use but his reason. Can he with expectation desire to look *God in the face*, in the other world, who in this state, the state of probation, doth not at all affect to retain God in his mind? *Secondly*, Can they look for any *reward* from him, in the future state, who do not at all set themselves to glorify him as God in this, neither are thankful? Can any expect wages, who have done no work? They cannot expect that God should bring them to honour hereafter, that have not set themselves to glorify God here. *Thirdly*, Will not the issue of holding

holding truth in unrighteousness, of contradicting the reason of our minds, of forcing our own judgments, of making havock of conscience ; will not the issue of this be confusion and astonishment ? What can a man look for, when he is not true to himself ; when he hath every thing within himself rising up against him, his conscience condemning him ? This cannot but end in confusion and astonishment. For things hold a proportion one to another ; force in one way, brings on force in another way. Consequents answer forgoing principles. So that the business of the day of judgment may, without the spirit of prophecy, be fairly foreseen ; may be here accounted for, by the things of this state. Men will be then left to receive and be filled with the fruit of their own ways ; and men cannot think that things will finally prove otherwise, if they have at any time in their lives, taken to themselves liberty to think with reason. But if men will presume, and content themselves with bare imagination, and be regardless and disorderly, and do not consider consequents by their antecedents ; men may flatter themselves and go on in a way of stupidity. But if ever a man be rational in his religion ; if he be serious, and consider, and use reason at all, worthy his make, he will foresee in an evil frame of spirit, and in a wicked and naughty course of life, he will foresee future misery. Men may indeed carelessly non-attend, or grossly neglect themselves, or divert themselves to think of other things, but for any rational hopes or expectations, they can have none, unless they can believe any thing, absurdities,

furdities, inconsistencies, contradictions, and impossibilities. In this case, every one hath within himself, what will foretell, and what will forewarn; what doth easily reprove and condemn him. He carries arguments in his breast, contrary to his suppositions. No husbandman can expect a crop in harvest, but according as he sows his seed. No man that is in a spirit opposite to God, goodness, holiness, and truth, that lives in a state of inconsistency to religion, can expect to be happy in any enjoyment of God in a future state, unless he can believe impossibilities and absurdities. Let us at least some time of our life be serious, and in good earnest. Let us apart and out of the world, ask ourselves but this single question (when the guise of the world doth not dazzle our eyes,) will this end well? will this course of life bring me to happiness? It is a thousand pities that men should employ mind and understanding only in the drudgeries of this life. This is my first observation; from what is done and acted in the present state, a man may *foresee* his circumstances in the future state.

Secondly, As hereby we may have foresight of the future state of man; so hence also is the account, how it comes to pass, that some men, that are high sinners, are of a most tortured, distracted, confounded condition; at least, at times and seasons, *in this life*; having hell kindled in their consciences; hell-fire flashing in their faces; as it were hell on this side hell. So it is with sinners: they are compounded of inconsistencies: they do conceive within themselves, things that are unnatural, and monstrous;

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strows : they have more knowledge of God, than love and affection for him : they have more light in their minds than life and goodness in their souls : by knowledge they are one way, by affection another way. These men, they then must be, when they are apart and by themselves, out of worldly distraction, in a tortured and in a confounded condition. When they do consider, they conceive within themselves, things that are monstrous, violent, and unnatural ; things which are upstarts and traitors to human nature. Lusts, humour, will, passion, have dethroned *reason*, man's natural sovereign, and have usurped the government of man. And where these are not subordinate to reason and judgment ; where these have dispossessed the natural inbred sovereign ; where these have usurped the government, and dethroned reason ; what a state will here be ? For none of these, lust, humour, will, passion, were made to govern ; but they were to be regulated. But where men will, because they will, where men live by their humour, and in passion ; and lust hath dominion over them ; here reason is dethroned : and these men must needs be in a state of great confusion, because there is so much of disorder within them. No society in the world so dis-tempered and confounded, as this little commonwealth of man in this case. 'Tis as *Acts* xxi. 30, 31. But now reason is uniform, and the dictates of reason, are satisfactory to a man, and calmly guide a man : but lust, will, humour, and passion, these are incendiary principles. We see the very best of many men by what is outward ; who put a good

face on it, when they come abroad ; but are very ill welcomed, when they come to their inward home. Wherefore we observe that persons of bad lives and evil consciences, do not love to be alone ; they had rather be in any company than alone by themselves : rather in any employment, than in the action of self-reflection, and considering themselves. Few men would envy those mens conditions, notwithstanding they may be attended with some worldly good circumstances, notwithstanding they make a good show in the world ; if they were but acquainted with their inward ails ; the aches, tortures, wrackings and vexations of their minds. It is observed by *Tacitus*, * concerning *Tiberius* the *Roman* emperor, that being conscious to himself of horrid wickednesses and unnatural practices, he could have no quiet, no composure of mind ; all divertisements would not do ; insomuch that the senate advise him to leave business, and try the country. But he writes back thus ; “ That if all
 “ the deities that ever mortals acknowledged,
 “ should conspire to make him miserable, they could
 “ not torment him half so much as the torment of
 “ his own mind.” Inward perplexities, confusion of mind and thoughts, occasioned by guilt of conscience, and naughtiness of mind, these transcend all the tortures of the gout or stone ; of which men have such dreadful apprehensions. *For the spirit of a man can bear his infirmity ; but a wounded spirit who can bear ?* Prov. xviii. 14. What hath a man

* *Tacitus*, Annal L. 6.

either to direct him, or uphold him, or comfort him, when he hath not the reason of his own mind on his side ? They are ignorant persons therefore, and in a mistake, that do represent the ways of religion and conscience, as melancholy, because men are kept within the compass of reason and sobriety. No ; there alone is heart's ease. It is the greatest mistake in the world ; because, in religion, are joyful apprehensions : men fear not God slavishly ; they do not think he will do them any harm ; but if a man be in a malignant disposition, and have naughtiness of mind ; he is, upon all self-reflection, troubled with inward vexations and fears. The wicked *are like the troubled sea*, Isa. lvii. 20. The reason why men live so unequally, that are out of the compass of religion, is, because they entertain in themselves, things that are so unnatural. As violence in the world natural is attended with 'conflagration, so in the world moral it is attended with exasperation of mind and with fury. This was the case of *Judas* ; he could not live, tho' his covetous humour was satisfied, and he had that that was his bargain ; yet he could not enjoy it. He that is in a wicked way, his wit will not serve him to the last run. This you have as a foresight into the future state ; so an *account* how it comes to pass, that some men have so much of hell in their own consciences.

Thirdly, We are to have *God excused*, notwithstanding his judgments seem in the world to be sometimes severe and sharp, in respect of the sharpest of all his judgments. There are sins of men, that are far higher in the rank of sins, than any judgments

judgments of God in this state are great in order of punishment. For there are sins in this state, that a man in reason would imagine that they must of necessity go *beforehand to judgment*, 1 Tim. v. 24. upon account of God's honour, and for the maintenance of righteousness. Also consider; they who lie under the greatest violence in this world, men of profligate lives and debauched spirits, suffer more from their own consciences, than from God's judgments: they suffer more from within, than they suffer under the immediate hand of God. And this I will demonstrate thus. The most intolerable suffering in the world, is to suffer as a guilty person, a malefactor; because he is privy to his own iniquity, and he is not true to himself. He hath the reason of his own mind against him, and suffers the torments of his own breast. Now the worst that any can suffer, saving this, is only to suffer without and not within. If I suffer under a power that cannot be resisted, and for no fault, I suffer either as a martyr for a good cause, or under an unavoidable necessity; being in no demerit or contradiction to the reason of my mind: and then I have all the strength of my reason, all the courage that is in my nature, to support me; which is comfort enough to me to oppose to my sufferings. But if I suffer as a guilty person; I am not then true to myself; I shall have all the reason of my own mind against me; for guilt is the sting of punishment. Therefore we should not fly in the face of God, nor challenge him for his judgments in the world. For the judgments of God are very tolerable, if we be not guilty.

guilty. Guilt is that that makes a man's heart ake : the most that judgments do, is to awaken sleepy consciences, and make mens consciences to bite them : it is a touchy angry business, *that* that we call *noli me tangere*. Those that are guilty are very shy, apprehensive, and sensible, till by use, practice and custom, *fearfulness* be contracted. So that the judgments of God are little ; if men be not guilty. The judgments of God are nothing, in comparison of the guilt that lies upon mens consciences. For *self-condemnation* is founded in man's guiltiness and faultiness. So true is it, *thy destruction is of thyself*, Hof. xiii. 9. and, that the judgments of God in this world, in the order of judgments, are not so great, as some sins are, in the rank of sins. Wherefore, O man, whosoever thou art who sufferest, wouldst thou effectually ease thy condition ? I advise thee do these two things ; put thyself upon self-examination, and the motion of repentance. The motion of repentance will quite alter the case, and all the world cannot give thee heart's ease, save in this way. For this is the greatest gospel-grace, that repentance should prove effectual ; that it should be otherwise with a sinner that repents, than with a sinner that doth not repent : for where we condemn ourselves, God will forbear. Upon a moral consideration the man is not the same ; for, after repentance, the man is passed into another spirit, and there is another law of his life. I dare say, without repentance, a sinner could not be eased in his own mind. If he have offered force to himself, in respect of his own principles, he cannot have content in his own mind, tho'

tho' God should withdraw and take his own hand off. There is no possibility of ease to a guilty conscience, unless a man do repent. If a man upon self-reflexion, out of a dislike of the evil of the thing if he do blame himself for doing of it, do all he can to avoid it, and recall it by repentance, and deprecate God for forgiveness; he doth morally revoke, and, in effect, blot out the line which before he had written.

Fourthly, I also infer, that knowledge should never be *obstructed*, but have a free passage; that what is truth should establish in us a frame and temper of spirit; give way to truth: let it overpower, prevail and conquer. If a man do not thus, he cannot secure his peace in the world.

I will now, in the close of all, add this serious *exhortation*.

Since therefore there is nothing so natural to reason, as to take cognizance of God, since mind and understanding in man are a peculiar faculty to that purpose; my exhortation is, that every man would take care of this, that is the main; to take cognizance of God in the world, and to glorify him as God. And, since he is beholden to God for all he hath in the world, that he would be thankful to him. If I know there is a God, what things are then included? Then all reverence, all regard, all duty, all observance of him; if I know there is a God, then all faith, assiance, adherence, trust, and confidence in him; if I know there is a God, (and if he be God, he is infinitely good, for the truest notion we have of God is, that he is the first and

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chiefest good;) then love and affection toward him, joy and delight in him; and above all things, to take care to please him, and approve myself to him, and to do every thing in subseivency, nothing in contradiction to his will. Now all this is founded upon this innate sense that we have of God, or the possibility there is to come to know there is a God, by our own being, and the being of the residue of our fellow-creatures. Now we have a great advantage in things of the mind, that we do not waste them by the use of them; but we do improve them: the more we use them, the more they are our own and the greater they are in stock; the more a man thinks, the nobler are his thoughts; the further a man enquires, the fuller will be his understanding: and to teach another, is to make the thing more our own. It is not so in materials: but here it is, *use, and have*. Wherefore he that is arrived to this knowledge, he is highly concerned; for go back he cannot: if he goes back, he runs into self-condemnation; so that go on he must, or else he had better never have begun, and his beginning will be lost. *He who hath put his hand to the plough, must not draw back*, Luke ix. 62. And indeed this I reckon to be the apostacy of the world, resisting of knowledge, to fail in a due compliance with known truth; that we do not comply with the reason of our minds; that we do not do and execute according to the principles of mind and understanding.

There is not that in the christian religion, from which one who hath his senses able to discern, would be released, or desire a dispensation. This
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is the exhortation, and this is the life of all the discourse ; let every man know, he may if he will, be resolved for certain, that there is a God : and then he is bound to walk in all good conscience ; then ought he to affect to be that in his measure and degree, that God is in his fulness. This is the settlement of our religion ; this is a great engagement upon us to live up to the rule of righteousness.

Lastly, To conclude the point, I would have this text read in the ears of every man that pretends to be an *atheist*. He must either deny the authority, or be self-condemned. And for the conviction of this supposed atheist, I affirm two things in the words for him to consider ; *first*, what the apostle doth suppose, as formerly asserted ; *secondly*, how he doth describe, explicate, and declare the case.

First, What he doth *suppose*, as formerly asserted, as proved by effects, that God made man to know that he is, and his essential perfections, so that the atheist's opinion is against his own very make. He may better believe that he himself is not, than that there is not a God.

Secondly, How he doth describe, explicate and declare the case. Here you have the atheist's temper and state ; not pursuing his knowledge, not carrying it out to its proper effect of *glorifying God*, and being *thankful*, he *becomes vain in his imagination* ; nothing is sincere and true that he thinks. For this is certain, that divine truth is so noble a thing, that wheresoever it is entertained, all things will be conformable to it, or men will be made desperate. *Their foolish heart was darkened.* He is become a fool,

fool, and hath wrought himself into darkness. He that affects to be an atheist ; it is thus declared concerning him, if he put away the sense of God, expect then, that he should become *vain in his imagination, and that his foolish heart will be darkened : professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.* He may pretend to policy and wit, to release himself from all obligations to reason and conscience ; that he may be loose in the world, and free to serve his own lusts ; a fetch of profane wit, and no product of wisdom ; but what in the issue will prove madness and folly.

Now atheists are of two sorts ; by *self-neglect* ; or by *contempt of God.*

1. There are many of the *former* sort ; for so all they are that *live without God in the world : God far from their reins.* So those that are drudges in the world, who make themselves very *Gibeonites*, to hew wood and draw water : these men sink themselves below their species, ascend not to the perfection of human action, they never do that that is most proper and specifick ; for I account *nothing is more specifick to man than capacity of religion, and sense of Deity.* But these men do wholly live, to seek for food, and for raiment ; they live like beasts ; they grovel upon the ground, and take what they find, never lifting themselves up to observe whence it comes. Too great a number of men are atheists in this kind, in a negative way : they never use reason in *that* that is the peculiar and proper act of reason ; but only to keep sense company : they never take cognisance of God, or do any acts of homage

mage to him. Thus men live every day to be less, spend their time wholly about worldly business. These are the *atheists by neglect*.

2. You have the *atheists by contempt* of God. Now of these men I can scarcely think that they do believe themselves: yea, I am confident the atheist of this kind, doth not believe himself at all times; unless his case be that which is the worst of cases, that God hath forsaken him, and delivered him up to a *reprobate sense*, and given him up to his own heart's lust. He that affects to be an atheist, he doth at times, trouble himself for fear of that God whom he doth not love; he fears him, and hates him, and suspects that he is; and would not have him to be. Unless it be the case of reprobacy of mind, and that is the worst of states in this life. I do not believe that he that is an atheist thinks at all times that there is no God. This I could give good proof of, that never did any in the whole creation, *more fear and dread Deity and death*, than those that have been bold to *assert that there was no God*, and wrought upon themselves to think that when they *die*, they are *annihilated*, and go out of being; and that all principles of nature come to nothing: which shews that these men sin against an innate sense of God, that is within themselves. They are many times beaten by the reason of their own minds. By-standers are not acquainted with the internal fears, jealousies, suspicions and heart-akings, especially at retirements, of this kind of atheists, lest there should be a God, whom they deny; and an existence of the soul after death. As
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there is the fullest satisfaction in the world, in the inward sense and feeling of reconciliation with God, the reason of things the rule of righteousness, goodness, and truth, a frame of mind tinctured with goodness ; so there is the greatest unquietness of mind, where there is an internal displacency and offence against the being of God ; and where there is a desire there should be no God, to believe that he is not, and an endeavour to think that all things are alike : the *former of these* hath all strength for him ; to wit, he that thinks and believes there is a God, and is in reconciliation with him, and with the reason of things, and the rule of righteousness, goodness, and truth : for he thinks that he that is well able to do every thing, takes care of him ; so that he needs not break his heart with care, nor interrupt his sleep : for whosoever believes there is a God, and that he is the original of our being, he must needs think that we are governed by his providence. This man thinks I must do my duty, 'tis true, but I am not primarily charged with myself ; that belongs to God. But now the *latter*, he doubts and fears uncertainly ; he suspects at times, that there is one that hath made and governs the world, and that power to be engaged against him. And I do verily believe, that there is no atheist, but at times, is in fears, and doubt and jealousies, unless given up to a reprobate sense. And whereas this atheist thinks that all things are alike and subject to will, and power ; and if power enough to carry a thing on, no scruple then ; (and this is that they deny God for, that it might be so ; that all things might

might be in themselves alike, he would take away the being of God : because this is the supreme law according to the nature of God, according to the rule of right) but sure he cannot but at times, think that it is better to be sober, than intemperate ; better to gratify and to do good, than to be violent and furious. Now when he comes to think, that in his fundamental notion, there may be an error ; then he cannot but think : oh, what will become of me, that have taken upon me to remove the old landmarks, and to controul the most famous rights, the most established laws, those things that all mortals do subscribe to, and are fundamental to the safety of the universe ! and I have taken upon me to vary from them, and to subordinate them to my will and humour : if all things be not alike, I am ruined to eternity.

Thus far for an *account* of the natural knowledge of God : and this you see is antecedent to faith and fundamental to all acts of devotion, religion and conscience : and whosoever denies the being of God, he doth it for this end ; he doth it that he may think according to the reason of things, all things are alike, and that if he hath but power, he may do what he lists. But this man, that thus hardens his heart, since he hath jealousy, suspicions and fears, and sometimes suspects he may be mistaken : since so it is, we are engaged, as we would secure our present composure of mind, and future eternal welfare, effectually to entertain this great matter of knowledge, *that there is a God*, and then that we are his creatures, and that we are to observe

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observe him, take notice of him, obey him, love him, and delight in him.

DISCOURSE LXI.

The miserable Degeneracy of Men through their Affectation of Atheism, and Practice of Wickedness.

ROM. i. 21, 22.

Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

I Have often admonished you of what import in religion, the *natural knowledge of God* is, and have made it appear to you, that God hath made man capable of knowing there is a God, and what are his natural perfections, in some measure, by the effects of creation and providence.

I will now superadd a little, and then dismiss this point. If there were no other argument in the world, to prove there is a God, a *man is an argument sufficient to himself*. For thus, a man feels that he is ; and he doth prove that by his acting : I act, therefore I am ; I do, therefore I have being : and if I am, either I made myself, or was made by another. I did not make myself : for if I had made myself at my own will, I could continue myself in

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being during my own pleasure ; and this I know I cannot : and this is great reason, because it is an exercise of less power, to continue a thing in being which hath being, than to call a thing out of nothing, into being : therefore I made not myself but was made by another. And then that other must neither be my *equal*, nor *inferior* ; for I can do as much as my equal, more than my inferior ; therefore I was made by a *greater* than myself, a greater both in wisdom and power : and this first independent being I call *God*. Thus is a man an argument to himself, of the existence of a Deity. This is the first point in all religion, and that that is fundamental to conscience ; which if it be acknowledged, all other things will follow. Here we do begin ; and at the day of judgment, God will make this out against his creation, that he made every intelligent and voluntary creature capable of knowing that he is.

Now that which makes men, who have put away reason and conscience, affect to be atheists is, that they may be arbitrary and unaccountable, and in danger of no power ; and to this purpose they *first* think that there is no God ; and *secondly* that there is no difference of things, but that good and evil, upon a moral consideration, is wholly imaginary : if so, if these two things can be resolved on, then may they gratify sense, please their lust and humour, and not be self-condemned, nor be in danger of any power, that will call them to an account. Then may will, lust, and humour, rule, and reason stand by, and have nothing to gain-say.

And

And this is pleasure and happiness to diseased and exorbitant minds ; for now they may carry all before them. Then also if a man can in the first instance be an *atheist*, he will easily in the next place be an *infidel* : and then Christ's condemning sin in his death, which is one of the greatest arguments against sin in the world, this will be looked upon as only a mad kind of notion, a *fraus pia*, a thing contrived to keep men in obedience, and a restraint and limitation to their liberty : for if not one God, then neither one mediator ; and so, natural, and christian religion will both fall to the ground. Now against this, God hath made a double provision, and it is as old as God's creation, the security and hold that God hath upon man. The *first* is man's capacity above all other creatures in this visible world. For Solomon hath told us, the *spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord*, Prov. xx. 27. a thing that *bath light, and gives light : lighted by God, and discovering God to man*. And the employment, and proper business of mind and understanding is, to follow after God, and find him out in his works, and to make acknowledgement to him of his goodness ; and this is the employment and proper function of mind and understanding in man. And it is sacrilege in the highest nature, for any one to sink down into the employment of *Gibeonites*, to drudge in the world, and to take no notice of God, no cognizance of him : and this is the *first security* God hath taken against atheism, *man's capacity*. Then *secondly*, an argument that God affords for conviction, assurance, and satisfaction that there is a God is, the

visible effects of God in the world, that transcend man's power, knowledge and apprehension, how they come to be, or how they may be done. A man knows the effect of his own power and skill, what he can contrive or bring to pass; and sees a thousand things in this visible world, that he can give no account of, he cannot so much as imitate them. This must be an effect of an intelligent agent, and because they are so various, they must be the effects of infinite goodness, wisdom and power: he cannot give an account of their principles, their make, their existence, and continuance, and therefore must acknowledge a being of higher understanding, and more plentiful power and goodness; because of his various communications. Had I one that was not a christian in this congregation, I could by this argument command his assent, by thus proving the cause by the effect.

Now I have done with this great point, and come to the sad and *dismal consequences* that follow upon this *affected atheism*: because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; there is the *atheism*, and then, that that is the mediate product and consequence of this denying God, either by neglect, or affectation is, *they became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise they became fools.* Now from hence I do observe this, that where there is not an honest entertainment of the great truths of religion and conscience; and a hearty compliance with them, and a ready obedience to them, but a failure in the main and principal points of

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of life and practice ; there mens pretences and professions of religion and conscience, are subject to evaporate, and turn to a most miserable account, and come to nothing. This is plainly in the text, where men knowing there is a God, *do not glorify him as God* : where men *are not thankful* ; therefore not sensible they are receivers : where men *do not like to retain God in their minds*, which is the atheist's temper : where men *do these things that are filthy, and take pleasure in them that do so*, which is the atheist's practice, it follows, they become *vain in their imagination, &c.* Now *to glorify God as God*, stands in these two things. *First*, to own him the general and universal cause. *Secondly*, To acknowledge him the first and chiefest goodness. They that do not this, *do not glorify God as God*. For he is not God, if he be not a general and universal cause ; and he is not God, if he be not the first and chiefest goodness ; *sine bonitate nulla majestas*. To divine perfection there is requisite, that to wisdom and power, there be also goodness. Now those two things do comprehend these six things in them. *First*, Highly to regard, adore, and reverence God. *Secondly*, Fully to submit to him, and depend upon his pleasure, in all things. *Thirdly*, To obey him, observe him, and perform his will. *Fourthly*, To love and delight in him. *Fifthly*, To be sensible of his free communications, and influence, and to be thankful. *Sixthly*, to make him the center of rest to our immortal souls, and our last and ultimate end : and whosoever fails in these, *doth not glorify God as God*. I will only say upon them all, that irreverence and

disrespect towards that being, on which we do depend for whatsoever we are, and have, is a most ununiform, incongruous, unequal and disproportion'd carriage. This is our perfection, who are by communication and participation, that we do imitate and resemble God : and the sum of all religion is *divine imitation*. Therefore nothing more inconsistent with religion, than for any man to have slight and foolish apprehensions of God in his mind. Nothing is more ununiform, nothing more incongruous, a crooked line not more different from a straight. The primary rules of good and evil, carries reason with them, so immutable in the eternal connexion of their terms, that, that which doth destroy all things else, time, cannot abolish or destroy them, but they are eternally so. It is an excellent notion of *Aristotle's* : he observes, that what is natural is immovable, and all the world cannot hinder it. It is natural for the fire to burn, and therefore it burns wherever it is ; it is natural to the sun to shine, therefore it constantly shines. So the same in the great instances of morality. It is every where due and necessary, to love God. If the author of our being, our original, then wheresoever there is an intelligent agent endued with mind and understanding capable of God, he is under this indispensable obligation of regard, adoration, and reverence, of submission to God and dependence upon his pleasure in all things, he is under the obligation to obey him, observe him, and perform his will, to love, and delight in him, to be sensible of his communications and influence, and to be thankful. We are

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to make him the center of our souls and our last and ultimate end. This is *natural*, therefore it is immutable. We may not break the rules of eternal reason, to let loose our power, to do whatsoever may be done, in contradiction to the most excellent nature of God, I say, we may not break the rule of eternal reason, to let loose our power, whether it be agreeable to the pure and excellent nature of God, or not. *We can do that, which we can of right do* ; but to do evil there is no power at all. We ought always to take cognizance what things are according to the nature, mind, and will of God ; and not to desire the contrary. So I bring you home to the main point ; that wheresoever there is not an honest entertainment of the great truths of religion and conscience, and a hearty compliance with them, and a ready obedience to them, such as is reverence of Deity, faith in him, love and affection to him, &c. But a failure in the main and principal points of life and practice, such as *not glorifying God as God*, nor affecting to retain the knowledge of God in their minds ; there mens pretences to religion and conscience are subject to evaporate, and come to nothing, and turn to a most miserable account : as you have it in six forms of words, *They became vain in their imagination ; their foolish heart darkened ; professing themselves to be wise, they became very fools ; they change the glory of the all-glorious God into an image made like to corruptible man ; they change the truth of God into a lie, and worship the creature together with the creator.* These are forms of words that the apostle hath in these, and the following

lowing verses of this chapter : and all this is consequent upon this *affected atheism*, of alienating mind and understanding from observance of God : and this is the point that lies before us. Wherefore it is a very great matter, *the ingenuous usage of truth : to receive truth in the love of it ; to receive it upon its own account, out of judgment and satisfaction of its conveniency and fitness to bring human nature to perfection ; as we are wont to say, as a characteristical form of words, to act out of love to righteousness : not as the unjust judge, of whom our Saviour speaks, Luke xviii. 2. which feared not God, neither regarded man ; yet to rid himself of the trouble he did the woman right : he did a thing materially just ; but not out of a principle, not out of a mind reconciled to goodness and truth. We are not to lay other designs on truth, not to practise upon it for other ends ; not to put it in the place of a mean but in the place of an end ; which the apostle reproves in 1 Tim. vi. 5. Men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness ; counting godliness to be a trade, traffick, and device for gain. If men do thus serve designs by truth, and practise upon it, and put it in the place of a mean, not of an end : then, in this case, 1st. Men will be false to their own profession, to the principles they hold forth, when worldly interest calls them off. And this the case of a hypocrite, or the case of fear and danger. 2^{dly}, Hence it comes to pass, that so much ridiculous, contemptible and unreasonable stuff passeth abroad in the world for religion. For I am fully persuaded, if truth were received*

ceived for itself, and out of the love of it, the world would easily be accorded and agreed in all the great concernments of religion. But because men serve ends unduly, and practise upon truth ; hence I say, it comes to pass, that a great deal of contemptible, and unreasonable, and ridiculous stuff passeth in so many parts of the world, for religion. Men do not engage themselves to look after *reasonable satisfaction* ; and truth is not the *end*, but the *mean*. And to me it seems to be one of the greatest prodigies in the world, that men that are rational and intelligent, should admit that for religion, which for its shallowness, emptiness, and insignificancy, falls under the just reproof and conviction and condemnation of reason. Religion, which makes us less men ; religion unintelligible ; or not able to give satisfaction to the noble principles of God's creation. But because this is general, I will shew you what I mean in particular. I will instance in the christian church and the heathen world. Such have been the cruel and impure rites of *heathenism* ; dissatisfactory to true reason ; and such are the superadditions of *popery*, founded neither in nature nor grace. In the *heathen* world, the licentious and odious feasts of the drunken god *Bacchus* ; the impure and filthy solemnization of the nativity of that common whore *Flora* ; which was so filthy, that it was by the *Roman* senate at last prohibited. This hath been religion in the heathen world : things altogether unsatisfactory to the principles of human nature. Then come to the *christian* world ; and there the superaddition of articles of faith that are superadded in the
Romish

Romish church, founded neither in nature nor grace, I will mention but two. The *first* is, the suspending the highest effects of divine power, upon the slightest things imaginable ; I mean, the pardon of sin upon being shrived ; high presumption ! The other is, the priest's power to turn attrition into contrition, upon the subjects confession ; impossible in itself ! for the alteration must be in the subject. This, they say, they have power to do and say. It was *Judas's* unhappiness, that there was no priest then ; for, they say, that if he had had a priest to confess to, his attrition had been as good as St. *Peter's* mourning for his denying of his master. Now can it be imagined, that any man that is honest, and hath a mind to reconcile himself to God, should believe such sorry things as these ? That a man may obtain the highest indulgence from God by being shrived ; or that any thing may be made repentance, by confessing to a priest ? Now can any man that useth reason, depend upon such points as these are ? Therefore, I say, this comes upon it, when men do not with honest hearts receive truth, and deal ingenuously with it, they are in danger to become *vain in their imagination*, &c.

I proceed. How hath the world been scandalized by pretended matters of faith, which are in a downright contradiction to reason ; if reason be able to tell us any thing that is true. Were I to take an estimate of christianity from hence, I should be tempted to say with *Averroes*, *Cum christiani comedunt quod colunt, sit anima mea cum philosophis*. Let my soul be with the philosophers. What rational
man

man almost would not be tempted to say after him rather than so to sin against his nature, as to admit a thing of such disproportion to all his faculties ? Can we think we shall prevail with men, to put out their eyes, and disbelieve their senses, that they may become good christians ? The *Turkish* history relates of a king of *Persia* inclined to christianity, who was diverted by such like reasons.

And on the other side, how well satisfied is any man of reason and understanding, in the great materials of religion, which are entertained with reverence and high regard ; as for instance, to live godly, righteously and soberly ? To live in high regard of God, reverence of Deity in a man's soul, a sense of our own inferiority and dependence ; a feeling of divine communication, motion of gratitude and thankfulness to God, the first cause and original of being, by whom we were called into being, by whom we are maintained in being, and from whom are all our hopes and expectations : to deal fairly with all men, to be of benign, and fair carriage with all persons whatsoever, to deal with our fellow creatures, as we would be dealt with. All the ways of *God* are ways of righteousness, goodness, and truth ; and why should not *ours* be so too ? And then to govern ourselves according to the rules of sobriety, temperance, chastity, and moderation. *This* is solid, real, and substantial religion ; these are things of the greatest certainty and foundation in the world. Did we hold forth this to the world, we should bring all men in to give their testimony for religion ; save those men that
have

have wrought themselves into a reprobate sense, And then in the fourth place, in case of failure, to return by repentance, do the contrary, be cautious and wary not to do the same again ; and to ask God forgiveness in the name of the Lord *Jesus*, who is the only advocate between God and man that is to say, for all those that have heard of it, This is the summary both of the *religion of God's creation*, and the *religion of Christ's restoration* : in thus doing we hold the head, and build upon the foundation of God's own laying. To live in regard of God ; to deal fairly and equally, and righteously with our neighbour ; and soberly and temperately as to ourselves ; and wheresoever a man fails, to return by repentance, and to go to God for pardon in the name of the Lord *Jesus* ; I could wish that the world would but consent that *these four* might be the materials of religion. These matters have general consent, but great neglect. And instead of zeal for these, wherein hath mens zeal been exercised, but about certain usages, certain modes, and rites of parties ? By these men are constituted and denominated christians, and ranked in order and file. Here is the miscarriage ; this I account the greatest folly and madness in the world. It is recorded, that the strifes and contentions and complaints of christians have irritated some of the ten heathenish persecutions. The ill lives of christians and their absurd opinions, and the bestowing their zeal upon matters wherein parties are constituted, have kept nations off from becoming christian. These things have been the scandal of christianity.

But

BUT on the other side, in the true christian religion, there is nothing but what is sincere and solid, nothing of vain suppositions, nothing but what is consonant and agreeable to the principles of reason, nothing but what may be represented lovely in the eyes of all persons that have the principle of reason for their rule. The sweet of christian religion is this, that it caresses and delights the nature of man. The state of religion speaks the mind's freedom from all impotent and unsatiable desires which toss a man's soul and make it restless; from all eager, violent and impetuous lusts; and by these men are torn in pieces; it is freedom from frothy, empty and ungrounded joys, and these put men into a fool's paradise: it is freedom from vain, foolish and disappointing hopes, which sink men into melancholy when they find themselves frustrated: it is freedom from all lawless, unruly and exorbitant appetites; from presaging heart-misgiving fears; from anxious, solicitous, self-devouring cares, from inward heart-burnings, from self-eating envy, from swelling pride arrogancy and ambition; from black self-confounding melancholy, from gnawing self-tormenting conscience; from boiling anger, raging fury, insolent self-will and arbitrary presumption; from all rigour, sourness and severity of spirit; from all those infinite passions, foul fiends, unruly devils in mens souls which make the minds of evil men to *boil* within them, as with the fire and pitchy fumes of hell; and which make the mind of man *like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast forth mire and dirt*, Isa. lvii. 20.

This

This is that which real religion doth. For what is *religion but good self-government*? What doth religion signify, but application to God, and imitation of him? For this is the sum of all religion, for us to affect to be in our measure and degree, like that being whom we worship.

I would superadd one thing more, that is the harmony and consistency that is between true reason, and christianity. There is the greatest correspondence between the principles of reason, and christianity, that is between any things in the world. For the latter, christianity, doth wholly acknowledge the former; and christianity coming in upon the apostacy from God's creation, it restores, and calls men back again: christianity reinforceth, recovereth, establisheth, yea doth advance and highly improves every one of the principles of God's creation; which are the principles of reason: so far it is from being true, that christianity doth discharge any of the principles of the creation of God, that it doth raise and improve them. As for instance; to do good for evil, to forbear all private revenge, to rejoice in the good of the whole creation, and to subordinate a man's particular good to a more publick and universal good. Therefore christianity doth not only recover human nature, but carries it on to a higher perfection; secures the common instincts of good and just; and polishes human nature. This may be undertaken and easily performed; notwithstanding the hard conceits, men who are not experienced have of religion. So that the principles of reason, the principles of God's creation, and *Christ's* restoration,

restoration, do the self-same thing ; and if they were well considered, nothing would give so great a satisfaction to the mind of man as they ; nothing would better carry him on to that perfection, of which he is capable. Of these principles I affirm *three* things. *First*, They are satisfaction to the reason of a man's mind. *Secondly*, Peace, quiet, ease, and relief to his conscience. And *Thirdly*, They keep human nature in its purity, and integrity. Wherefore it is a great charge that lies upon us, *to use truth ingenuously*. Therefore if any one would be restored, let him return again from whence he is departed, and re-settle in his soul the principles of God's creation, and take care of the first issues that immediately flow from them. I'll conclude with a saying of *Socrates* ; " Nature, the workmanship of God, as coming out of God's hands, is a preservative to all those that use it ingenuously and well."

D I S.

DISCOURSE LXII.

The miserable Degeneracy of Men
through their Affectation of Atheism,
and Practice of Wickedness.

ROM. i. 21, 22.

*But became vain in their imaginations, and
their foolish heart was darkened.*

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

YOU have had an account of God's workmanship; the foundation of God's laying; and what God might well expect, having done so much. But men failing herein, I come now to shew you the fatal issue and mischievous consequences that follow upon so great a miscarriage. Man able to see, know and understand that there is a God; and what he is: man able to do him honour, and to be thankful to him; failing in this, he runs out into vain imaginations; and wherein he pretends to wisdom, therein he fools it more grossly. The knowledge of God; which man is made to, which fairly lies before him, and he may easily attain to, is by men neglected, unemployed, not improved: whereupon (as in the *text*) men run into ways of fond imagination, folly, and self-conceit; misrepresenting God to themselves, dishonour him in the worship

worship they pretend to ; abuse themselves, run into all excess and unnatural use of themselves, grow into malign and naughty dispositions, as is exprest, ver. 29, 30, 31. Whereupon my observation is this ; where there is not a fair usage of divine truth, (whether it be truth connatural or revealed, where there is not conscience in men in pursuance of their knowledge) there nothing worthy of religion is likely to follow ; but the consequence is dismal, the miscarriage shameful, vain imagination, darkness of mind, folly, and superstition. For thus judgment will not hold, where it is not settled and further pursued by suitable disposition and practice. All this loss, ruin, havock, and mischief breaks in upon the nature of man, through his being wanting to the principles of God's creation within himself. — The free, noble, and generous notions of *divine* and *heaven-born truth*, will not stay and abide with men where *there* is gross neglect or abuse. — There is strange confusion, where judgment is further enlightened than the mind refined and amended. *As*, where there is not judgment and knowledge of right there can be no expectation at all ; *so*, where there is no conscience in pursuance of knowledge ; there, what is done, may be worse than if nothing were done ; as the case of the text expresses.

It is not so much the *disability* of mens natures, as *their neglect* and *abuse* of themselves ; that men are not good. *Justin*, in his history, reports concerning the ancient *Scythians*, “ That they had
“ neither houses, nor inclosure of ground ; yet
“ *justice* had honour among them ; not from *possi-*

“*true laws*, but the good nature of the people.” — A thing to be admired, that *nature* should bestow *that* on the *Scythians*, which the *Grecians*, long instructed by precepts of philosophers, had not attained ! that formed manners should be transcended by uneducated barbarity ? — Hence it appears that the condition of *human nature* is not so very *rude* as some report ; since so much is found in the uncivilized parts of the world. Nature is sovereign to them that use it well, in respect of its modesty and averfeness to that which is not fair and handsome ; till men pervert and abuse nature’s temper, by ill use, custom, and practice. No man is born so as he makes himself by dissolute living. The sinner is modest and shamefaced at first ; evil begins at a little ; for goodness and virtue are much more suitable to nature’s sense than wickedness and vice. Vice is contrary to nature ; if it were not so, it were not vice. Vice is contrary to the nature of man, as a man is a man ; for it is contrary to the order of reason, which is man’s highest principle and perfection. Now that vice is grievous to the nature of man, I will instance but in three things : irreverence to Deity ; intemperance in respect of a man’s self ; fury and cruelty in respect of others : every one feels it so in himself and judges so in others. The nature of man startles to hear a man speak of God profanely ; and to be sottish, how loathsome is it to see ! And for a man to be devilish, who is it that doth not run away from it ? A man forceth himself at first, before he can at all satisfy himself in any of these. In this sense

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sense I understand that of the apostle, *Heb. x. 16.* where God saith, *I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds I will write them, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.* How doth God do this ? This is to be understood in respect of his divine and spiritual precepts, that God hath founded in reason, and in the law of the creation ; concerning which, we need not that one should teach another, as in the carnal and *Mosaical* institution ; which being foreign to nature, and containing so many precepts, a man had need to ask, what am I to do next ? What in such or such a case ? But in respect to these precepts, these eternal rights, these principles of immutable and unchangeable goodness and truth ; God hath written them in mens hearts, and hath put them into their minds : and this is the meaning of those words, if you consult the context ; for they are put into a contradistinction to these *Mosaical* institutions. But for these great points ; the rectitude of a man's nature and purity of his mind, did continually lead him to them. The great moralist *Cicero* tells us, that the seeds of all virtue are sown into our own nature ; and if we did but suffer them to grow up, they would lead us into all happy living. This is true in a sense inclusive of God's grace and assistance as declaratory of the issue of good endeavours, true use, improvement, and exercise of our faculties, or thus ; this is to be understood, *cum bono deo*, with divine protection, grace and assistance supposed, and upon good endeavours, true use, improvement, and exercise of our faculties. But on the other side, where men sink down into sensuality and brutish-

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ness,

ness, or become light-headed, being intoxicated with vain persuasions, or lay asleep the noble powers and principles of human nature, or contradict them by violent and unnatural practice; all things prove contrary to the intent of God's creation, there is darkness, confusion and inward torture.

Men may work themselves out of nature's sense, out of judgment of truth, by ill use, custom and practice. This you may take for granted, that men will not long continue to think well, after once they *are come to affect and to do otherwise than they should*: for these two in conjunction, the affection of the mind and practice, will bear up with too great a force against judgment alone. Therefore if men speak well, and they themselves think and mean well; yet if they do not love goodness and righteousness, and do not live well, there is no hold of them. It is just the case of *Hazaël*, see his present sense and words, *2 Kings* viii. 13. the prophet tells him what prodigious things he should do; and he thinks it was impossible for him to do such things: but, what, *is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?* Yet for all he was thus forewarned, had all possible advantage, yet he *did* these things. Therefore this is that I observe, if men give themselves up to loose practice, their judgment will be counterbalanced by contrary life and practice. For the habituated sinner (as every one doth become by use, custom, and practice of evil, the habituated sinner) follows the inclination of his mind, against reason and judgment; he doth not consult the precepts of righteousness, but he doth what is next.

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When a man is one, so in respect of his reason and understanding, that for his inclination, he is not such; it is easily guessed what such a man will come to. For single judgment and understanding will not long hold out against settled disposition and habit. Men unduly practise upon their own judgments, that they may not be disturbed and disquieted in pursuit of their lusts: but if judgment be once corrupted, nothing is left to make any resistance; evil comes on a main; men go on with full sail; as the apostle expresseth it, 1 Tim. vi. 5. *Men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth.* And 2 Tim. iii. 8. *Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith,* Tit. i. 15. *Such men down-right resist the truth.* Hence it is that so many men are so much shipwrecked in their fortunes within themselves, so much broken, and come to nought. One would wonder how some are spoiled as they are; it is the prodigy of the world; nothing in the inferior world is equal to this degeneracy of rational agents; who by violent practice have born down all before them, that they may quietly enjoy their lusts. But here is the case: wickedness and the malignity of a man's heart, doth vitiate and spoil a man's temper: wherefore let me advise you let me propose upon account of religion, two things that every body, as he loves his life, he would use care to establish in his own soul a throne of judgment and then take care that heart and life be reformed by it. In the state of religion, two things are indispensibly necessary, indivisible, inseparable;

care, that judgment be informed by truth, and that heart and life be reformed by tincture of it, and by practice. And *this* I call religion. It is an inlet to a flood of evil, a little departure from judgment, Two evils follow upon it : *first*, it is far harder to return to a man's judgment than to have stood to it : *secondly*, one false act it doth betray a man ; it is to the weakening of his judgment ; and judgment of right is the first and leading principle of religion.

Now I have done with this observation : upon the whole, I will make one other observation ; and that is this, to prevent a mistake : let us not run on in a mistake : we see how our apostle, here in this chapter, goes on declaring the way of sinners being received by God ; and I have followed the apostle. He begins at the gospel of Christ, *ver.* 16. But where is he now ? See how he pursues it. He is now come to treat of the natural knowledge of God, and the fatal issue of an ineffectual entertainment of it, *ver.* 19.

I will make this advantage of it, to prevent all mistakes, that men are not wanting to preach the doctrine of the gospel, or to *preach Christ*, tho' they do not name Christ in every sentence or period of words ; who contend for all effects of real goodness and decry every wickedness. If this be not so, our apostle hath greatly forgot himself. If men contend for the effects of real goodness, and decry wickedness, they do truly and properly preach *Christ*. And this the reason ; for this is the effect of *Christ*, and this is *Christ's* business. *God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless us.* How ? by turning
away

away every one of us from his sins, Acts iii. 26. Wherefore whosoever doth deal with men to leave off sin, preaches *Christ*, and carries on *Christ's* work. Luke xxiv. 47. *That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.* They preached *Christ* who preached repentance. And again : *the grace of God that bringeth salvation ; what doth that teach ? To deny ungodliness and worldly lusts ; and to live soberly, righteously, and godly,* Tit. ii. 11, 12. Here are the effects of morality. Therefore talk no more against moral preachers : for they who call upon men to live godly, righteously, and soberly, they carry on the work of *Christ*, and these men preach *Christ*. And (to add no more) by the promises *we are made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust,* 2 Pet. i. 4. Therefore it is not christianity to use the name of *Christ*, as we do use a charm or spell ; or only as a badge of a profession ; as all they do who affect to use the name of *Christ* unintelligibly, irrationally, insignificantly, unaccountably. For, to speak of *Christ* really, and to speak sense when I name him, two things are to be understood : for *Christ* doth denote two things. *First*, A person engaged for us, in a way we well understand ; for we are told it, and have learned it, and can give an account of it. And, *secondly*, he doth denote a nature in us, which we very well feel in us, and can express. They therefore hold forth *Christ*, who declare him one way or other, who speak to either of these effects or purposes ; sometimes to one, and sometimes to the other, as the argument leads them.

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And by the way, let men understand what it is to *preach Christ*: see how the apostle begins in the 16th verse, and goes on in the 19th verse. So that *Christ* is preached, tho' in every sentence he be not named, if the business of *Christ* be done, and the work of *Christ* carried on.

Now I am to give you an account of these words, *professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*

You are to understand these words spoken of persons that are quite out of the way of true reason, and sober religion. I would consider these words two ways: *first, absolutely*, as in themselves: and *secondly*, in relation to their conjunction with the words that go before and follow after, in the former way, they afford us this observation, *they who think themselves to be wise, are least of all so*; for they know not themselves to fail in many things: they who conceit themselves to be wise are the veriest fools: none more really mad than those that flatter themselves, and conceit themselves to be some body. For these men fail in that that is the very first principle of reason with all wise men, *viz. know thyself*: and they fail against the great direction of divine wisdom, *Prov. iii. 6. Lean not to thine own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge God and he shall direct thy paths*; and the direction of the prophet, *Jer. ix. 23. Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise-man glory in his wisdom, &c.* For *whosoever trusteth in his own heart, is a fool*, *Prov. xxviii. 26.* They are a great deal worse for their self-conceit: for self-conceit doth intoxicate, and make men neglective of the means of knowledge. Whosoever
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are conceited, and self-flatterers, and towards others they are very importune, grievous, and troublesome. Whosoever happens to fall into the hands of a self-conceited person, who always is a dictator, a self-flatterer; and in respect of others an imposer; I appeal to this man to estimate and to judge the beauty and excellency of those divine virtues, modesty, and sobriety, and humility; to him these are abundantly testified and recommended. The conceited have lightly considered those things that rule in the life of man, neither the uncertainty of things; otherwise they would talk less peremptorily, they have little weighed the many temptations, and various representations that are made to man; nor our disparity and insufficiency, either to act or determine wisely, in several occasions of life; which whosoever hath taken into consideration, he is moderate and wary. But these men have over-looked all these, and take upon them to dictate and declare, and controul all men's sense: these men are full of themselves indeed, but really empty and shallow. I dare without violation of charity, determine thus far, he is not for certain a wise man, he knows not himself, who either thinks himself *able* enough for his own defence against all things that may befall him; or *wise* enough for his own direction; or *good* enough for his own satisfaction. This I offer upon a general consideration, taking these words out of the context, *professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*

Secondly,—I consider these words as they stand in the context, and as in conjunction with what comes after; *they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God*
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into an image made like to corruptible man, and changed the truth of God into a lie. The words taken in a conjunction with these other words, afford this observation ; that it is not at all the wisdom, knowledge, or largeness of mens understandings ; but their headiness, fondness, presumption and folly, to do any thing in religion, without true reason or otherwise than as they have direction from God. It is the folly and madness of men, to be found out of the way of reason, or divine direction : for where God doth not resolve in particular, by some piece of revealed truth, there God refers men to the principles of his creation, reason. Wherefore if you have not a text of scripture, be rational in what you do : for what is rationally done, will justify it self ; for what is without reason is without efficacy ; and *what is not from God we cannot think will recommend us to God* : as in particular, the forming of an image of God ; the second commandment against it ; no reason at all for the use of images in divine worship, and I am sure no institution of God in the case. For since the date of the institutions of Christ, the true christian worship is to *worship God in spirit*, John iv. 24. *and to rejoice in the Lord Jesus*, Phil. iii. 3. the former because God is a spirit, the latter because Christ is the way to God. One God and one mediator : and *Heb. xiii. 15. by him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually* ; which imports owning and acknowledging the head. Wherefore, as no other *object of worship*, than the God that made heaven and earth, so no other *mean of worship*, but the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom
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whosoever comes to God, certainly finds access, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. *acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* And to me it is very remarkable, what St. *John* the beloved disciple closeth his epistle with, *little children keep your selves from idols.* 1 *John* v. 21. Which gives us strong intimation, that in the christian state, there may be danger of idols. And then *worshipping the creature more than, or above the creator.* I a little vary that, for I think that condemnation reacheth no body : I read it therefore in conjunction with the creator ; not that they did *prefer* them, but *conjoin* them. Now the text saith, these kind of persons *became fools* in so doing. And it is strange that any that pretend to adore God should do it so poorly ; that instead of religion, they should be accounted mad and foolish : for this there are these two accounts wherein the madness and folly doth consist.

First, Scripture calls it so. *Isa.* xliv. 19. *They cut down a tree, with part thereof they build a house, with part thereof they make a fire, and with the residue thereof they make a God.* Now, saith the prophet, *they consider not in their hearts* how dull and sottish they are in thus doing : *none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge, nor understanding, to say, I have burnt part of it in the fire, yea also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof, I have roasted flesh and eaten it, and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination ? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree ?* Thus it is judged therefore, if the scripture be called to give judgment in the case. The like you have in *Jer.* x. 11. a remarkable place both for the argument, and the language of the place. *The gods that*

that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. In these words there is argument enough. The gods that did not make these heavens and this earth, they are not supreme : but the God that made the heavens and the earth, he, and he alone, is supreme and sovereign. Then for their *language* : whereas all before is *Hebrew*, this is put into the *Chaldean* language, as words that they might then understand, when they should be in captivity. And *Psal. xcvi. 7. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols ;* and *Deut. iv. 12. And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice.* It is too much for any creature to take upon him to make a *Shechina*, a place of divine inhabitation, a thing God seems jealous of, *2 Sam. vii. 5. Shalt thou build a house for me to dwell in ?* Spake I a word about it ? Even where he accepted *David's* good meaning. That is the first, the sense of scripture.

Secondly, In the nature of the thing : there is no grosser folly in the world, no greater wrong to one's self than upon account of conscience, or in point of religion, to come under obligation to any thing, in point of judgment and conscience, that is not *materially* true, as verified either in reason or scripture ; and that for these reasons. (*1st.*) All such is the person's superstition ; which, tho' it be not imputed as a crime to the person who means well, yet is not a foundation of reward : for I take it thus ; that if any make themselves to be bound in conscience,

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ence, where they are not, they are superstitious ; and though they may by God be pardoned, yet this is no foundation of a reward ; but so far forth they are losers, builders *with hay and stubble, though themselves stand on the foundation*, 1 Cor. iii. 15. (*2dly*) A man enslaves himself, parts with his liberty, (which is a dear and choice thing,) where he should not ; and this is clean contrary to 1 Cor. vi. 12. *all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.* I speak now of things admitted as matters of religion, or as parts of it ; for there is great difference between *parts* of worship, and *circumstances* of worship. I meddle not with things wherein men may submit to their superior, or comply with their brother. In things of an indifferent nature, we may without offence to our judgment and conscience, observe superiors, or comply with our brethren, to increase love and good-will ; and use our own christian prudence and liberty : for the thing in its own nature doth not determine us. But we enslave, and bring ourselves into bondage, when we are bound in respect of internal sense and judgment ; where things are not necessarily due or made due by some appointment of God. I take it for granted, where scripture doth not limit or direct us, there God doth refer us to the former communications of himself, in the light of his creation. Now if that a man receives be not *materially* true, he doth receive that as from God, that is not from him. And *2dly*, He gives that to it, that he should give to God. *3dly*, He doth subject himself to that which made him not, to that which

which is not sovereign to him, as reason, which is his natural perfection, his home-informer and monitor within his own breast. It is man's natural perfection and therefore there is more due to reason than to those things that are but his imagination. 4thly, It is not restorative to him in his lapsed state, as all things in religion are, if it be not materially true, solid in itself, real and substantial ; or hath not warrant from God, it hath no restorative virtue to man, in his ruined and lapsed condition ; and therefore doth not deserve that man should pay that to it, that is due to reason, or religion. My 5th reason is this, that if men admit any thing into the repute of their religion that is not intrinsically rational, or truly warrantable ; they lay stress upon that that will not bear weight, and therefore will deceive them : for it is *not as the fool thinks, but as things really are.* As the superstitious imagines, so things are to him : but things attain not effects, according to our fancies, but their own existences, and what they are in truth and virtue. Now this elsewhere is accounted weakness and shallowness, which men that would be thought wise, are most unwilling to be accounted guilty of. Nothing betrays any man more for folly than lying refuges, and false confidences, *Prov. xiv. 15.* A man doth himself a much greater wrong, by doing a ridiculous act, than if a thousand men should bestow the name of fool upon him. In this case of laying weight upon things above what they can bear, expecting from them that that is not in them, men put the fool upon themselves ; which is worse :
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for if others do it, we easily suffer the wrong ; but if we do it ourselves, of whom shall we demand satisfaction ? Thus have I done with the second consideration ; that it is madness and folly in men, to charge upon themselves that that hath no foundation in reason or divine authority. Therefore give me religion that is grounded in reason, and by divine authority ; and that doth attain real effects, such as are worthy what we mean by religion. In short, to instance in particulars : the religion that makes men humble and modest ; not proud and conceited ; that makes men poor in spirit ; not full of their own mind ; not given up to their own sense and thereupon to self-will : the religion that makes men good-natur'd ; not all for themselves : that makes men loving, and not hard-hearted : that makes men kind, not harsh and cruel : the religion that makes men patient, not furious, not wrathful and outrageous : that makes men mild and gentle, not revengeful : the religion that makes men subject and obedient to government and authority ; not that that is turbulent and troublesome : the religion that makes men courteous, affable, and sociable, not sour, morose, and dogged : that makes men ready to forgive, not implacable : the religion that makes men favourable in making best constructions of words, carriages, and behaviour, and not that that makes men offenders for a word, as the prophet speaks, *Isa. xxix. 21.* Such severe captious persons there are, that *make a man an offender for every word* that cometh out of his mouth : the religion that makes men ready to commiserate in every compassionate

sionable case, as we hope God does, Samaritan like tender-hearted ; not as the Jews, that would have no dealings or converse but with those of their own nation, unless they agreed with them in all their modes. This is what religion is in its proper effects, and if this religion took but place in the world, then shall the world be sensible of the good of religion, and we should all find ourselves the better for it.

DISCOURSE LXIII.

The miserable Degeneracy of Men through their Affectation of Atheism, and Practice of Wickedness.

ROM. i. 28, 32.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, &c. Who knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit such things are worthy of death) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

YOU may remember, that for the remaining part of this chapter, I only proposed to speak two things. The miscarriages of sinners : and the judgment of God upon these miscarriages. Concerning mens miscarriages, I have spoken already ;

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that is, mens knowing that there is a God, and *not glorifying him as God* ; that men being beholden to God, are not *thankful* : that men run out into vain *imagination*, grow conceited and foolish ; concerning mens vanity in modelling worship to their own fancies, making an *image of the uncorruptible God like to corruptible man*. There remains two more, of which I will speak, and then proceed to those forms of words which represent God's displeasure ; as *giving men up to their own hearts lusts, to vile affections, and to reprobacy of mind*. Only two miscarriages remain now to be spoken to, verse the 28th, and verse the 32d. If the time will permit, I will give you an account of these two at this time ; and afterwards give you an account of God's indignation, and displeasure upon this high provocation. And truly this form of words, verse the 28th, *not like to retain God in their knowledge* ; they do not only challenge sinners, but also give us a fair account : and it is admirable and satisfactory to understand things aright ; and things are never known but when we see them in their *causes* and principles. He is a wise man that understands things from the causes and principles of them. *Not liking to retain God in their knowledge* ; whence I observe, that it is not so much that there is difficulty in the knowledge of God ; it is not a real difficulty or uncertainty concerning the being of God, that God is so little known, or regarded in the world, neither is it so much man's impotency and incapacity, that he lives without God in the world, as it is his unwillingness, averfeness, and disaffection. It is that that is his affectation, either

that God is not, or that he is unconcerned. And this is a great truth ; for we must know that it is very monstrous, and horridly degenerate, to be off from the original of being : this being universal in nature, whence we are, by the same are we maintained. And so the prophet represents it, *Isa. i. 2. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken* : which is a reproach to man, intimating that it is better speaking to the brutes, than to men that are become brutish ; What ? *I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.* And verse the 3d. *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* And so the prophet *Malachi, Ma. i. 6. A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master : if then I be a father, where is mine honour ? And if I be a master, where is my fear ?* But this is the baseness, that doth accompany unrighteous dealing, that where we have begun to wrong God, there we proceed to hate him, or at least to wish he were not. And this you may observe in all bad natures ; he is made an enemy, not only who hath done an ill office, but he whom he hath wronged : not only he is an enemy that hath done an ill office, but he is an enemy also, whom this bad-natured man hath wronged. For where we have once done an injury, we take it for granted, the injured person is our enemy, and then go about to disable him, for our own security. Bad natures that are full of naughtiness are unacquainted with that noble disposition that inclines men to pardon : and therefore wheresoever they have injured,

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ed, they hate. Thus it is between man and man, and so it is between God and man. *For men think of God as they are themselves: thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself*, Psal. l. 21. But on the contrary, see what the grace of the gospel leads men to in case of failure or miscarriage: the grace of the gospel bids deprecate, repent, acknowledge, leave off to sin, do so no more, ask God forgiveness: so vast a difference there is between the strain of the world, and the spirit of religion; the tempers of the subjects differ as much as the state of heaven and hell. One of these, he in whom the spirit of religion dwells, thus he thinks and saith to God, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? who in earth that I desire in comparison with thee? It is good for me to draw near to God*, Psal. lxxiii. 25, 28. Attract and draw me to thee, and stay me with thee. But the other, *God is not in all his thoughts*, Psal. x. 4. *God far from his reins*, Jer. xii. 2. And the sense of his soul is, *depart from us, we will not the knowledge of thy ways*, Job. xxii. 17. This then is my observation, future subjective misery is not any foreign imposition by power, but it is an acquired constitution of man's mind and spirit: it is guilt upon mens consciences, and a malignity of spirit. For, methinks, the phrase in the text is very characteristical, *not liking to retain God in their knowledge*; which is a note of remarkable distinction.

Now, least I may discourage any body, either by declaring that which he finds not practicable, or in that he is sensible of his own shortness, I here declare, two things do not amount to the case in the

text ; of not liking to retain God in their knowledge.

First, An unavoidable interruption, or a cessation from actual thoughts of God, at times. For this cannot be remedied, because of the necessity of our weak natures. There must be eating, drinking, and sleeping. Also these minds of ours will not bear divine cogitation ; and we cannot, in this state, bear too intense thoughts of God ; though truly there is no great danger in it neither ; for the worst of it would be to die by philosophy : we may be swallowed up by mental contemplation of the Deity itself.

Secondly, There are avocations of business in a way of ordinary employment ; and this is not only lawful for us, but it is necessary for us to regard them. And to these two I *add*, that there are indispositions occasionally, when men are out of temper. The best of us all doth not find himself always alike, and how it comes to pass he cannot tell.

It is not a *negative cessation* from actual thoughts of God for a time, that doth interrupt our communion with him ; but a *private defection*, and taking up of our hearts in receiving full satisfaction in the things of this life : a staying too long abroad from God, or committing spiritual fornication with the creature. When we overlook overtures from God, are wanting to season and opportunity : when we do not close with remarkable advantages to retire a while, and think of God : this is a private defection, and that that is culpable. In short, *three things* are prejudicial to our duty toward God, and our happiness

through their affectation of atheism, &c. 277

happinefs in enjoyment of him. *First*, If there be an inward *displacency*, an habitual indisposition, and averfation. *Secondly*, If there be a long and a tedious *vacancy* from acts of acknowledgment of God, and a fenfe of our dependence upon him ; for men may grow ftrangers, by never meeting. *Thirdly*, When there is not due *fubordination* of temporals to spirituals. But otherwife here is my rule, he cannot be thought to neglect his journey, who intends it in the morning when he fets out, and referves to himfelf day-room enough, and keeps on in his way till he comes to his journey's end. So whofoever doth acknowledge God at his firft fetting out ; (when I *awake I am ftill with thee*, either from my natural reft, or to every new undertaking :) now he that begins with God, that is, he takes care that he engages himfelf in that that is warranted by God, and goes by rules of action, and is fenfible of his own infufficiency (who is but a fecond caufe) without the affiftance of God, who is the firft caufe, and ufeth proper means ; he doth not lie under the charge of the text. Two cautions here I will give. *First*, That all obferve things in order to the end. *Secondly*, Nothing destructive, nothing inconfiftent. That is for the fecond ; though employed in our worldly bufinefs, and without actual thoughts of God for a while, we are not to charge ourfelves with *not liking to retain God in our minds*. Then the third, that we are not always ourfelves. This will be wholly unavoidable, during this ftate. For while thefe *three* things are, the beft of men cannot promife himfelf to be in that temper, in which he allows himfelf to

be. *First*, While encumbered with *bodies*, which are very apt to be weather-wise ; and it is only a man that is transcendently wise, that can overcome bodily temper : but such a man is a rarity in the world. Very good men find themselves ill-disposed from these dull and gross bodies ; our bodies are affected by change of time. These gallant men, the *Platonists*, did mightily complain of dulness and stupidity of body ; here there must be allowance ; for no man's body hears the reason of his mind. The body is not capable of instruction, but must be governed by other arts ; by abstinence and temperance, and compliance with seasons. *Secondly*, While we are liable to be at times *surprised* with sudden emergencies, which busy our heads, and take up our thoughts, and employ them, if that fall out, that we look not for. We have instances of some, that have died either with sudden joy, or grief. Sudden emergencies take up our thoughts how to behave ourselves in such a case. *Thirdly*, While we fall into variety of *converse*. In different companies, things pass under different and various representations. So that a man sometimes finds other mens opinions better than his own which gives us occasion to vary our opinion of things, and presently to be of another opinion. And this is for the better ; for we that are finite and fallible ought not to think ourselves wise enough for our own direction, nor able enough for our own preservation, nor good enough to our own satisfaction. In this case, a man is all of a sudden possessed of himself, and carried out to new apprehensions.

sions. This will employ a man, as if he had the government of the world in his hands : these things make a man to be less himself, and not to pursue his former intention.

This is all the abatement that I can give you for assurance that you are not in this condemnation, *of not liking to retain God in your minds*, because you are in an indisposition from one, or more of these three things. But for a *caution* on the other side, great care must be taken : if this indisposition be contracted by guilt, by an undue act, or any culpable neglect ; then take care of two things. *First*, That as soon as may be, conscience be relieved and eased, and the guilt taken off in the way the gospel doth direct. *Secondly*, That the integrity of your disposition God-ward be recovered, by the motions of serious repentance ; which is always attended with great humility, and sense of our own weakness, apprehension of our necessary dependence upon God, and double care for the time to come, and after-diligence. For though it is possible for a regenerate man to fall, and to sin ; yet it is true that St. John saith, *1 John iii. 9. whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin* : if he do sin, he passeth into another nature : 'tis unnatural to the regenerate state to commit sin. Then he doth not like himself ; if he do not recover himself by repentance, if he doth not renew his repentance, and his faith. And no man can assure himself, that his repentance is sincere unless conjoined with deep humility, and a sense of our own weakness, and an apprehension of our necessary dependence upon God ; and unless he doth
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really intend to be more watchful over himself, and diligent for the time to come. It is not religion for a man to confess sin, and to commit it : and commit sin, and confess it. But whosoever doth confess sin, and pray to God for pardon, he ought certainly to use all means to preserve himself for time to come, that he sin not in the same kind. And he is not only distempered, but is plainly dead in sin, who is never awakened, to look out after means of recovery.

And this is the caution I suppose, that the point I am upon may not be a doctrine of carelessness. I reserve the case of unavoidable interruption, or cessation from actual thoughts of God at times : but if an averſation towards God, contracted by guilt of sin, or any undue act, or culpable neglect, then care to be taken, that as soon as may be, conscience may be relieved and eased, and the guilt taken off in the way the gospel doth direct. Any body that hath received a wound, the first thing he doth, he goeth to a surgeon. If any one have taken poison (though by accident) he presently goes to an antidote. So if any man have wrought himself into an averſation God-ward, by consenting to known evil, he must look upon himself as having admitted poison ; he hath sinned against his own life : therefore his first care must be, to make his peace with God, and relieve his conscience from guilt by repentance, and that it appear to be real, let it be accompanied with deep humility, and a sense of his own weakness, and an apprehension of his necessary dependence upon God, and let him be more watchful over himself, and diligent for the time to come, that he do

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do not wrong his soul, or give his God an offence a second time.

I now pass on to discourse of the 32d verse. *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* This is the last character that represents the degenerate state of miserable mortals. I have spoken to all the former heretofore : now in short to this. And I will only gloss in four or five particulars upon these words.

First, Who knowing. This is highly observable, and of great advantage to us ; whereupon our apostle lays the stress of mens sin, the aggravation of mens sin ; and whereupon he grounds mens being liable and obnoxious to condemnation within themselves, and condemnation from God ; *knowing ; viz.* upon their natural capacity of knowing there is a God, and knowing there is a vast difference of things. This is the foundation we stand upon, against the atheism and profaneness of a dissolute world. And I dare assure any affected atheist in the world, that if he can implead God at the day of judgment, that God did not make him to know God, and to know that there is a great difference between good and evil ; he shall stand in his cause. And pray observe how often this is repeated by the apostle ; and he lays it down for his foundation every where, where he doth reprove and challenge ; *verse the 19th, because that which may be known of God is manifest in them ; for God hath shewed it unto them ; verse the 20th, for the invisible things from the creation of the world are clearly seen ; verse the 21st,*
because

because that when they knew God ; verse the 28th, and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. He makes this the condemnation of men ; intimating that man hath the knowledge of God and sense of Deity ; but takes no pleasure in any thoughts of God. And then in this place, *who knowing the judgment of God, &c.* And pray of whom doth the apostle speak all this ? Not of men that were disciplined in any way of worship ; but he speaks this of men we call heathens ; and he chargeth all this upon them in respect of the natural principle. This we are to understand, that God did more than a little, when he made man intelligent and voluntary : and in this respect he doth represent God more than all the creation below him ; and herein men are made in the image of God upon a natural account. And wheresoever there is in the make, a principle of reason and understanding, there is a foundation of religion and conscience. Now let this be our justification, if any one calls us moralists only, and not divines ; that we write after the apostle's example, and imitate the apostles, when we do build upon the foundation God hath laid, when we build upon natural principles, the principles of God's creation : and, which is further observable, the apostle speaks all this of the degenerate state of mankind. They therefore miserably represent God in the world, that think he will judge his creatures by his power : he will examine them by the principles he gave them in the moment of his creation, and we need not fear being condemned of God, if we are not self-condemned. That is the first.

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Secondly, The judgment of God. That is a remarkable word in the *greek*. Whence I do observe, that all God's impositions upon men, all his injunctions, all his institutions, whether they are in a way of command or prohibition, they are all the fruits of *wisdom* and understanding, in conjunction with *righteousness*. They are either just in themselves, or else the use of his rightful power. For power, dominion, and property he hath over his creatures. In the state of creation we read not of any thing *positive*, but one single prohibition. And without doubt it was the right of him that raised a creature out of nothing, to have limited him more if he had pleased. In the gospel-state nothing at all is *positive*, but what is useful, expedient, and convenient. There is nothing but what the necessity of man's apostacy did call in and require. As for instance; here you have a summary of the gospel, as it is a superaddition to the law of the creation; *To go to God in the name of Christ*; and then the *two sacraments*. These three make up the superaddition of the gospel to the religion of the creation. Then for the religion of the creation; those famous, glorious, eminent, universal rights, these are of universal acknowledgment; to wit, to live in all reverence of God; to be sober and temperate in the government of our selves; just and righteous in our dealings one with another; or, as the prophet saith, *to do justly, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*. Mic. vi. 8. But that all the dispensations of God to man are all sentences of justice and righteousness; besides that in reason, we cannot otherwise think,

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scripture abundantly declares, *Psalms cxix. 137. Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true in all thy judgments. Rom. ix. 14. Is there unrighteousness in God? God forbid. Job viii. 3. Can God by power do any thing that is contrary to right? And the apostle, Acts xvii. 31, he shall judge the world in righteousness.* And this makes me superadd a little more: for this word in the text, as it may import the *righteousness of God* in his sentences, so it may also the *righteousness of God* in justifying creatures; and when he comes to controul and punish the exorbitancy of a creature, he doth not at all exceed. I will make two inferences and pass on. Then there is no wrong from God to any creature, nor any hard measure. Nothing is more certain, than that God hateth nothing that he hath made; *his tender mercies are over all his works.* Secondly. If this be a law of heaven, where there is a power that cannot be resisted, where there is fulness of liberty; if this be a law with heaven, that all the proceedings from God to his creatures be righteous and just; why should not finite and fallible creatures think it worthy of themselves, to be limited to ways of reason? Why should not we think it becomes us to justify what we do or require, by the reason of things? Let a man but think thus, he that will do because he will; let him but ask himself, suppose his superior should govern by that measure, what a case or condition should he be in? Since therefore God, who hath a power; since all his ways are regulated and confined by laws of reason and justice; he is a most degenerate creature, that will do because

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Thirdly, Who knowing the judgment of God. Wherein men are concerned, they may know, and may have an account of the dealings of God with them, that they are just and righteous. And is there better quarter in all the world ? Doth any one desire more, either of parent or brother, than that he should have no other usage but what is justifiable by reason ? Upon this account only we are self-condemned if we do not observe God's injunctions : for negative infidelity will never destroy any : but that men do not receive when they are offered or do when they may. God is not an *Egyptian* task-master. I dare say, to the honour of God, that if he lay no foundation, he doth not look for any superstructure. If he doth not give a capacity, no more accountable than the irrationals are. But if they know ; according to their knowledge they are under obligation to obedience. There is nothing, wherein the world hath more agreed, than in these two : *a universal general cause*, and that there is in themselves a vast *difference between good and evil* upon a moral consideration. A general consent of nations in this matter.

Fourthly, That they who commit such things are worthy of death. There is a worthiness of death in the things they do, whom God condemns. We are apt to fly in the face of God, and think if God would, we may do what we will ; and if God would pardon, we may live as we list, and no harm done. It is not the inflictor, but the demeritorious cause
that

that is worthy of blame : For the very things that they do are deadly things : yea, they are materially death itself. For what is sin but the death of the soul ? And we say the person guilty is *dead in law*, there needs nothing but the declaration of it, and making it out. Now sin is the death of the soul ; for sin divides from God, the fountain of life ; and none can have life, but by communication and participation ; wherefore it as necessarily follows, that there should be death, if sin interposeth, as there is a necessity there should be darkness, if any thick body interpose, and cut off the beams of the sun from us. *Two inferences. 1st.* We are then quite out of danger of God's power, prerogative or dominion over us, if we do not betray ourselves ; if there be no guilt, we need not fear God slavishly at all. For if you be not guilty, you are not obnoxious ; his great power is your preservation. *2dly.* Wilful sinners are self-murderers, ruin their own souls. They are as truly self-murderers, as he that shall know a thing is poison, and yet takes it.

Fifthly, Not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. I observe from these words, men make themselves obnoxious, otherwise than by their own personal acts. A man is not only guilty for what he doth, but for what he takes pleasure in. A man may make himself guilty, by applauding, or approving an evil act after it is done, by shewing complacency or assent to what is evilly done. Wherefore all abettors, all counsellors, all consenters, all that after take pleasure in the thing done, all that justify the person that do it, they are all guilty.

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I will close this with two *inferences*. *First*. Let me charge you highly to take care of your *company*. For though you are well resolved, that for your own selves you will do nothing but what is just ; yet if you be in company, and take pleasure ; yea, I dare say, by being silent, you will become obnoxious. *Secondly*. Let me advise every one when he enters into secret to make his peace with God, that he then call to mind what company he hath been in, and what hath been done by his company and converse. Let us consider the iniquities of the vicinage, our relations, or persons of our converse : some of these may be in some measure ours also ; though not our personal acts. To justify, to countenance, and take pleasure in sin committed by another, is not less bad than to do it ourselves. Now for this I will give you this account. It argues more of a depraved mind : for he that doth it, may be induced by the temptation of pleasure, or profit ; but he that takes pleasure in it, sins without a temptation. To approve of, or take pleasure in what is ill done by another, is a greater sin than he that doth it is guilty of ; because it is with a less temptation ; for they are not induced at all by the temptation, either of pleasure or profit ; but these men are of more havocked consciences, and more degenerate minds. 'Tis very likely that these men have more naturalized themselves to the malignity of naughty acts, and have by former base use, custom, and practice, alienated themselves from respect toward God, and love of righteousness : so that they have forced away all the ingenuity and modesty of nature.

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nature. For to approve of, and take pleasure in the impudency, madness and folly of others, is to sin either upon no, or a less temptation: whereas to sin by weakness, or upon a temptation, is the only colourable pretence and apology. And this is the account I give for this, that as a man may be guilty by participation, where he doth not actually do, so in some cases, he that doth not do the act, but takes pleasure in it, may be the worst of the two.

DISCOURSE LXIV.

The direful Vengeance which falls upon the Souls of incorrigible Sinners.

ROM. i.

Part of the 24th, the 26th, and the 28th verses.

24th. *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness.*

26th. *For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections.*

28th. *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.*

YOU may remember the order and method I proposed to myself, to treat of the remaining part of the chapter. Having given you an account of the dreadful miscarriages of apostates, who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness, and did not love to retain the knowledge of God in their minds; but affected

affected to be atheists, that they might be arbitrary, lawless, and live without fear or controul ; and other characters of them having been given, I now come to the *second* part, that is, the punishment of these sinners, and horrid transgressors, and that is on God's part. You have had an account of man's behaviour towards God, now take an account of God's ; and you have these *forms of words* to express them. *God gave them up to uncleanness, to their own hearts lusts to vile affections*, ver. 24. 26. *To a reprobate mind, to do things which are not convenient*, ver. 28. And to have God justified, *they did but receive the recompence of their error*, ver. 27. But before I speak to that that is consequent to voluntary consenting to known iniquity, or gross neglect of God and themselves, which are the adequate opposites to God, and religion ; I find it requisite for God's honour, to give you an account what hand God hath, either in the sin of his creatures, or in the sinner's misery ; because it is said, *God gave them up*, &c. This truly hath been one of the hardest questions in the world how evil came into the creation, since God was good and made all good ? To vindicate God from having any hand in the miscarriages of men, or being the cause of it, my business therefore shall be to shew you, that neither the evil of sin, nor the evil of punishment can be attributed to God. For if God be the first and chiefest good, as indeed he is, then evil is not from him, it is not that which he hath decreed or designed or appointed, but it is consequential, necessary, fatal ; and by consequence inseparable from the miscarriages of sinners. I shall give you

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an account of the saddest place in all the bible ; *Isa.* vi. 10. Where you have it, *make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed.* This place is no less than six times referred to in the new testament ; you have it in all the four evangelists, *Mat.* xiii. 15. *Mark* iv. 12. *Luke* viii. 10. *John* xii. 40. in the *Acts* of the apostles, *Acts* xxviii. 27. and in the epistle to the *Romans*, *Rom.* xi. 8. the six first books in the new testament. And the scripture never represents the forlorn state of sinners, but it refers to this place. To give you some account of this ; there is an excellent distinction in one of the fathers, *Chrysostome* he saith ; *that seeing they may see, and not perceive, &c.* that is, not that God had any such intention, or that God would have it so : but it is consequential ; so it comes to pass, so it falls out ; this is the natural issue of mens not dealing ingenuously with truth ; they are the worse for their knowledge, if practice be not answerable. But more of that hereafter. I am now to give you an account ; that evil is not to be attributed to God : yet I find that the scripture doth frequently seem to attribute it to him ; but you must understand that the scripture-notion is this, because God is the *first universal* and general cause of all things, therefore the scripture attributes and ascribes all things that are to him. But when you come to an explication, there is as vast a difference and distinction as between God and the devil, heaven and hell, light and darkness, good and evil. Some things are by his efficiency, such as he doth

doth by himself immediately ; some things by his assistance, which he doth, by commissioning others, *i. e.* by second causes ; and some things by his permission ; that is, he doth not hinder them. With this difference we must understand scripture attributing things to God. For certain we must resolve these two things : *first*, that God is no true cause of evil : *secondly*, that he doth what he will, where he will, when he will, how he will, and thinks not fit to hinder it. For nothing is more certain than that holiness and righteousness are the divine endowments ; and holiness and righteousness make it altogether repugnant and morally impossible for God to have a hand in evil ; such evil whereunto turpidity, malignity and deformity are annexed. If you attribute malignity, deformity, turpitude, the evil of sin to God, you deny his moral endowments, his prime perfections of goodness, holiness, and righteousness. Wherefore we will absolutely conclude, that whatsoever God doth, by himself immediately, or in conjunction with any second cause, it is in itself thoroughly good, and worthy the first and chiefest goodness : and if this be not true, let any man give me an account of these places of scripture. *Is there unrighteousness with God ? God forbid, Rom. ix. 14. If he be unrighteous, how can he judge the world ? Shall not the judge of all the earth do right ? God is holy in all his ways, &c. Gen. xviii. 25. He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, Acts xvii. 31.* What doth that intimate ? Not by arbitrary will, but he will proceed according to a certain rule, such a rule that

is *suo jure*. It is a great question in the book of *Job*; can God by power or privilege, do that that is not right and just? *Job*. viii. 3. There is nothing that the scripture doth more clearly and fully deny than unrighteousness in any of the ways of God. It is a gallant saying of one of the fathers: God cannot with righteousness punish things, that by his commission are done. No one can be there a just revenger, where he is an evil author. Therefore God is not the author of evil. Wherefore, there is no principle true, from whence this may follow, that God is the author of evil.

In pursuing this assertion I positively lay down two propositions.

First, Antecedently to the being of evil, God doth what infinite wisdom doth direct, or goodness moves to prevent it: that is, by declaring against it, by warning and admonishing, by frustrations, and cross providences. And,

Secondly, Subsequent to the being of evil, when evil is done by an accountable creature, God, where he pleaseth, and when he pleaseth, in his infinite goodness, brings good out of it.

First, Antecedently to evil, God doth what infinite wisdom doth think fit, or goodness moves, to prevent it. He doth warn, admonish, declare against, tho' he doth not chuse absolutely to hinder it. Now if any one say, but why doth he not engage his almighty power absolutely to hinder evil? Four things in answer.

I. God is not at all bound. No man can alledge, upon any ground of reason, that God having made

a creature intelligent, and voluntary, accountable to him, punishable if he do ill, rewardable if he do well, that he should every where interpose.

2. Those that are neglecters of God they do not deserve it, they cannot claim any such courtesy from him.

3. It is not at all suitable to a probation-state. We are runners of a race, we work for eternity, we are now in a preparatory state; how is a man put upon a probation, if God by an irresistible power, should make it impossible for him to fall? What exercise of virtue, if God by his irresistible power make evil impossible?

4. Thus to do is God's peculiar kindness, and courtesy to those that act in God's name; that begin with him, and are always sensible of God's presence with them. That for the first.

*Secondly, Subsequently to the being of evil; when evil is done by a defective or a malicious cause, evil having taken effect, God in his infinite goodness, if he pleases, turns it into good when he pleases, and as he pleases. For sometimes he cures a man of high presumption, pride, and conceit, by suffering such a person to fall into a sin, that brings him to shame. I dare say, saith one of the fathers, * it is very happy, that a proud, arrogant, self-conceited man may fall into a sin that may shame him, and make him see himself. Since many times, if God let such a man fall into a sin, it is to humble him. Else it is expected, that God should resist the proud, Jam. iv. 6. and that the backslider in heart be filled with his*

* St. Austin

own ways, Prov. xiv. 14. And this is the goodness of God, when he will bring good out of evil, and turn that which is a man's sin to his advantage, and advancement.

Now that God is no cause of man's sin, may appear from these two things ; which it becomes us to aver concerning our creator.

1. That God doth not *deny* any necessary aid and assistance before hand, to any of his creatures.

2. God doth not *withdraw*, but upon demerit, offence, and provocation : God doth not leave any of his creatures, before they give him offence, and first voluntarily forsake and leave him.

He doth not in the *first* place deny necessary help. For I account that providence is as sure as God. If providence, then necessary help. And *Secondly*, God doth not withdraw till after provocation, and the creature first forsakes him. I observe both in the transactions of communities, and common affairs of mankind ; these great truths are acknowledged in human things. For in the arraignment of malefactors, two things are put in ; *done by diabolical instigation* ; and, *not having the fear of God before their eyes*. Which intimates, *first*, that God keeps all them that keep to him ; *secondly*, those that God leaves, the devil drives. These two things seem to be acknowledged by that that is your phrase of arraignment. There are three terms proper to make use of to explicate this point, *objective*, *permissive*, *judicial* ; for neither of these denote any efficiency on God's part toward evil. All things do work by way of *object* with sensible agents ; but they work differently,

differently, according to what the recipient is, what one does in like case, another does not. If I speak of temptations, by way of object ; it is not to be laid upon the object, but the disposition of the agent ; for instance, *Peter* and *Judas* : *Peter* through fear denies his master ; *Judas* through malice, betrays him. *Judas*, hath attrition and desperation ; *Peter* hath contrition and repentance. So likewise in *Joseph* and *David* : what one takes, another refuses ; where one is ensnared, another comes off with triumph. So that here God is excused in motion, by way of object ; the effect is not imputed to the object but to the agent. For the second way, *permissive*, concurring in the way of *permission* ; God is not to be charged upon this account ; because whosoever is *sui juris*, hath right of action, he is not under the prohibition of another. So that what he doth, is imputed to himself, as his own choice and free determination ; for the law of right, and rule of reason are the things endued with power of warrant and restraint ; and so every agent whatsoever, he is to consider the immutable and unchangeable law of righteousness, goodness, and truth : he is to consider the *right of the case*, and the *reason of the thing* ; and so cannot excuse himself, that any power did not hinder : for he being an intelligent agent, and voluntary, is to be governed by the law of action : so no account to be given, that he was permitted, or that no superior power did hinder him. We in our judicature leave all men to their liberty, till there is conviction : and we never impute that to the government, that a malefactor doth amiss :

amiss : but the fault of the government is this, when they do not punish condignly. So that herein is a man's sin, that he varies from the rule of action. He cannot lay any fault upon any superior, that he doth not hinder. We are wont to say, who-soever despiseth God and the law, he may be master of another man's life, be the government under which he lives never so watchful and never so right, for here is the greatest security that we have for our lives, that the law does require that man's life, that takes away another's. And this is a necessary circumstance to a probation-state, it is true, as the scripture tells us, the apostate spirits are kept in chains of darkness, because God will not trust us in their hands, but men that are in a probation-state, they are at liberty, and it is necessary to a probation-state, that there be liberty, and that evil be not unavoidable. But then, *thirdly, judicialiter*, as a judge, who-soever acts as a judge, comes after an evil action, for the work of a judge, is to go according as things are proved. Wherefore the evil is in being, before the work of the judge is begun. The judge hath no place till evil be done, complained of, alledged, and proved, and then he can be no cause of the fact. For he hath nothing to do, till after the evil is committed. In none of these three ways, we attribute evil unto God. Therefore this I must say, we must make it good, much more of God, which St. Paul saith of himself, *I am free from the blood of all men*, Acts xx. 26. And I am sure that God is both free from the sin of men and their misery.

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These three things we must say of God, if we will do him right.

First, It is most certainly true of God, in relation to his creatures, that he doth fully answer the relation he stands in to his creation, and whatsoever he hath made. Now you that know what belongs to the kindness of a parent, I put you to judge *Is. xlix. 15. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.* Now you know it belongs to a parent to foresee, and prevent mischief to a child; and if mischief befalls it, to help it out: and what is true of indulgent parents to their children, is true of God ten thousand times more.

Secondly, He certainly doth whatsoever is *due* and requisite, in pursuance of all the principles of his creation, so as to make them effectual: for he is not vain as foolish mortals are, to have beginnings frustrate, to begin, and not to go on. This we do observe; let any man attempt to set any thing a-foot, if he do not bring it to a state of consistency, he loseth his labour; the things return back again. Now for a man to imagine that God should make a creature, and give faculties and principles, and then deny that that will make that which he hath done effectual, is either to impute to him rashness in his undertaking, or else impotency; I am sure, want of goodness.

Thirdly, It becomes us to think of God that he will do whatsoever becometh infinite *goodness*: he will answer his relation; he will do that that is worthy

worthy infinite goodness, and that certainly amounts to this, to do all good upon the highest, fullest, and clearest account of goodness, if there be not reason to the contrary. But that he should, by his almighty power, keep out evil out of the creation, there is no reason : it would then be no probation-state. Wherefore that that the prophet saith is a most real truth : *O Israel, thy destruction is of thy self.* Hos. xiii. 9. Wherefore I account it materially blasphemy, to say these two things of God, (I charge not the intentions of mistaken persons) to say, that God is the cause of the creature's sin. Or, *secondly*, Of the sinner's misery, by the absoluteness and arbitrariness of his will : as if save for God's will, a sinner might well enjoy himself, be at peace within himself, and be happy doing what he will ; which some have been bold to say, and more have been apt to think, that saving the prohibition, good and evil are both alike. No ; as virtue hath reward arising out of itself, so sin and wickedness hath punishment arising out of it self, *receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.* An inordinate appetite is its own punishment. Nothing in the world so draws on another thing, as guilt doth mischief and punishment. They are things inconsistent, for a man to be under sense of guilt, and to be happy. God need not do any thing, he may but absent himself, and let him alone, and this man is in hell by his own production. Wickedness is contrary to the nature of man ; therefore cannot but be vexatious and tormenting. The great heart-fore, *cordolium*, is guilt upon the conscience,

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conscience, and malignity in the mind, a perverse and a naughty spirit ; no wounds of the body are equal to the torments of the mind. A sinner's misery is of his own creation.

Now I must suggest to you the positive causes of evil ; and they are these eight ; which I will speak but a word to.

First, Objects may incline : for we are all faculties ; and the world is made up of objects : and all objects have an attractive virtue ; and it is natural to our faculties to take cognizance of objects.

Secondly, Examples may entice : we are apt to write after precedents, to do that that is done.

Thirdly, Opportunities may invite : he that never thought of playing the thief, he is tempted upon a fair advantage.

Fourthly, Constitution may dispose : this is a home-bred suggestion ; a man only by wisdom and virtue overcomes bodily inclination.

Fifthly, Company may persuade.

Sixthly, Evil angels may seduce : so the scripture tells us, *that Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number the people*, 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

Seventhly, Men themselves abuse that liberty and power they hold of God and enjoy under him : for although all power be explicable for the better, yet it is an abuse of power, to do that that is not fit to be done : it is no more than it is in a paralitick agility of motion, when the man trembles every joint, not from nimbleness of spirit, but want of strength,

Eighthly,

Eightly, Whensoever evil takes effect, we may conclude, that God did not think fit to *hinder* it; and this is all I will attribute to God, and all the place I will leave for God in this thing; for if God had hindered it, it had not been.

Now if any man ask, why did not God hinder it? I refer him to my reasons before, and ask him, how comes God to be bound? Where is God's courtesy, if he must equally consider them that neglect him, and them that commend themselves to his guidance and ducture? And if he should hinder, he should counterwork the very design of his creation, when he made man intelligent and voluntary, and put him into a probation-state; and bid him act for eternity. We must remember, that man by his make, is a free agent, is both intelligent and voluntary; and in this state a man is under this bar; *positus in æquilibrio*, else could not sin: he is counterpoised on the one side by that that is just and honest, against that that is on the other side pleasurable and profitable: and here is a man's counterbalance; looking to God, he is well directed; looking to the allurements of sense, he is tempted: the delightfulness of sense is corival to that which is in it's nature just and holy. Now here God taking high offence, and having just indignation against man's foolish affectation and wilful choice, whom he made intelligent and voluntary, that he should in such an unequal competition, determine himself to the worst, he doth not hinder, but leaves him to the fruit of his own ways, and saith, *then let it be according to thy heart's lusts, and be filled with thy own*

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ways. Prov. i. 31. Therefore, let not any man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own hearts lust, and enticed. James i. 13, 14.

The inference I would draw from hence, is,

That we be very careful and cautious how we attribute evil to God ; or, how we charge or entail the sins and misery of men upon him. I dare say, it is not possible for the tongue of man more to dishonour God, than thus to do. For this is the account I give ; that the moral endowments of God, to wit, his holiness, his righteousness, and goodness, are those *prime perfections* of his, by which we are induced to worship God ; and we know more of these than of his other : for as for his other perfections, we are confounded when we think of his omnipotency, omnipresence, infiniteness : but for his moral perfections, his holiness, righteousness, and goodness, of these we have a participation. Now to attribute the evil of the world to God, is to destroy all these notions : yea, we may say of God, that the will of God, and the power, are always in a conjunction with his moral perfections ; yea, they are determined, limited, guided, and directed by them. This is so far true, that even in those things which the world calls severity in God, they are acts of goodness and righteousness. For it is good, that God do controul by punishment, impenitency, and contumacy in sin : and it is as well an act of goodness, by chastisements to reduce the lawless and rebellious, to controul an obstinate and impenitent sinner,

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ner, as it is an act of goodness to pardon sin to those that do repent. There is a good intention in chastisements ; for, notwithstanding our great boasts of our free-will, we should be too great strangers to duties of piety and virtue, unless God should, now and then, exercise us with sicknesses and afflictions, as a counterpoise to our propensions to follow the lusts and pleasure of life, and the ordinary allurements of the world. Now since we are so charitable, that in a well established government, which rules by laws, and punishes such offences, where now and then by accident, murders and robberies are committed ; we do not impute them to the governour, much less ought we to impute the miscarriages of men to God ; since God hath declared himself against ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ; since all sinners know they do amiss at their own peril. God gave no such power unto men : for power is concluded within bounds of reason and right. Lawless and exorbitant acts, are impotencies and deformities.

Now I superadd here the necessity of this doctrine I have so much insisted upon. If we attribute evil to God, these four mischiefs are likely to follow, which will root up all religion and conscience.

First, We shall think of God contrary of what *God is*, and worse than he deserves of us ; and then we shall less love him, and less regard him. So we shall not represent him to ourselves a lovely object ; for the fountain of good is highly lovely ; but the author of evil is the most unlovely object ; and he

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is not the most lovely, unless he be the fountain of goodness.

Secondly, We shall not think aright of evil, nor hate evil as we ought : for if we impute it to God, a man will say, what harm is there in that which God doth ?

Thirdly, We shall excuse *ourselves* more than there is cause for, and shall abate in ourselves the sense of our own faultiness ; for then we shall look upon ourselves only as God's instruments : and you know the principal he doth excuse the instrument.

Fourthly, We shall take very little care to repent, or revoke any thing unduly done. For who will trouble himself about that which he thinks is the will of God ? And a man will ask himself, *who at any time hath resisted his will ?* Romans ix. 19.

A word for the latter, and I have done. God is not the primary cause of the sinner's misery. There is no reason at all why we should expose ourselves to temptation, by attributing external evils to God, more than we have assurance of. If we attribute all external evils to God, then you put an invincible and an intolerable load upon the virtue of patience ; and patience must bear the load of all. And truly we are not so submissive to God, nor so free from self-love, as to put forth acts of patience to such a height. This I ordinarily hear, when any thing befalls men, they say, *it is the will of God.* To explicate this. It is true, that God doth exercise his judgments in the world ; but yet I will deny

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two things. *First*. That God doth whatsoever evil
befals men : and, *secondly*. I deny that it is true,
that all evil that befals us, is the punishment of sin :
they are neither of them certainly true. It is true,
and we have reason for it, to attribute the universal
deluge to God *Gen. vii.* The destruction of *Sodom*
to God ; *Gen. xix.* for it is said God did it. We
have cause to attribute to God the sudden death of
Nadab and *Abihu* : *Num. iii.* the destruction of
Corah, *Dathan* and *Abiram* ; *Num. xvi.* of *Ananias*
and *Saphira* : *Acts v.* for it is ascribed to God ; and
the cause assigned. But it doth not follow that *all*
the evils that befall us, are the immediate hand of
God. For, *first*, Some of them may follow upon
the condition of the matter, just as rust follows the
nature of iron ; some evils do fall out from the state
of the world : *secondly*, Some we bring upon our-
selves, by our neglect, or abuse of our selves ; as the
diseases that follow upon intemperance, or the harms
that follow upon violent and unnatural motion : or,
thirdly, Some are the effects of malicious causes, for
which God will challenge accountable agents. Now
therefore since there are other causes, how doth it
expose men to temptation ? how doth it misrep-
resent God to men, to attribute *all the evil* that befals
them to God's immediate hand ? It is very true, that
God hath this power : but for the exercise of this
power, to say it is certainly God's work, whatsoever
the second causes be, this is that which I reprove.
Wherefore let us entertain good thoughts of God,
as much as may be ; that we may be encouraged to
repent, and have faith and confidence in him ; and
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do not attribute that to God, which we have no assurance is the immediate hand of God ; but only God did not interpose ; as where it follows the nature of the matter ; or brought upon ourselves by our neglect, or abuse of ourselves ; or where foreign agents have done us a mischief. No, you may imagine that God hath created second causes, and doth permit things to go according to the nature of second causes ; and he doth interpose when he will. But, with very great caution, attribute things that are grievous to God ; but recommend God as lovely, and the object of love, as much as possibly you can. For since God is not the author, or cause of the creature's sin, but that the greatest evils of sinners arise from themselves ; and for that the evils that befall us, may be attributed to other causes : therefore let us not without cause, throw them upon God.

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DISCOURSE LXV.

**The direful Vengeance which falls upon
on the Souls of incorrigible sinners.**

R o m. i. 29.

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, &c.

IN these words you have the ultimate issue of the horrid, monstrous, degenerate state of mortals. The very reading of this catalogue is enough to startle and awaken any body, and make him considerate and apprehensive of his danger, so as to betake himself to religion, and to come within the confines of it, that he may be delivered from such abominations. One would wonder that human nature should so degenerate, should admit of them, that such villainies should ever be reported of any, who by their institution are intelligent and voluntary agents ; I had need almost to apologize for reading such a text in the ears of a christian auditory : and were not this in the bible, I durst not be so uncharitable : and had I not spoken of several things in the chapter before, I should not have singled out this alone. I intend not in my discourse, to make a discovery concerning wickedness in these various expressions :

expressions : I am very well aware the world well understands what is meant by these words : my intention therefore is either not at all to speak, or very little, save here and there. But here is one of this catalogue I have singled out to speak of, which, because it is a very cunning and subtile evil, but deadly dangerous, and very mischievous, and requires some accurateness, I shall endeavour to discover it ; and that is, *covetousness*. You may suspect it shrewdly by the company it keeps : nothing in all the scripture is more branded, nothing in all the scripture put into worse company ; for it is reckoned with all the horrid effects of degeneracy and apostacy. I find it very ill spoken of in scripture ; it is put in an adequate opposition to all religion. *Pf. cxix. 36. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.* It is a principle of the basest practice, for it hardens itself to any purpose. *Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandize of you, 2 Pet. ii. 3.* And when our Saviour tells us of those things that defile, and tells that nothing without us or about us defiles us (and yet we find many that pretend to religion are greatly troubled with things without them, and about them, but) amongst these things that defile, is this covetousness, *Mark vii. 21, 22, 23. For from within, out of the hearts of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, &c. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.* It is also a thing of a very ill quality : for the apostle saith, it is idolatry, *Col. iii. 5. Covetousness which is idolatry.* Nothing is more threatned in all the

book of God. *Jer. li. 13. O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness.* *Psal. x. 3. The covetous whom God abhorreth.* And then there is a promise of long life where covetousness is excluded, *Prov. xxviii. 16. he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.* And we are warned against covetousness, and told, *it is the root of all evil, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. For the love of money is the root of evil, which while some have coveted after, they have, &c.* Yea, it hath so much of malignity in it, that if any man pretend to religion and be covetous, we are warned to have nothing to do with him, *1 Cor. v. 11. If any man that is called a brother be covetous, with such a one, no not to eat.* And I the rather choose out this, because you see how dangerous it is, how displeasing to God, how mischievous to men. And yet it is a cunning, subtle sin. No man doth so justify himself, or is so hardly brought to repent, as he that hath a touch of *covetousness*. It is the hardest matter in the world, to persuade a man that had a touch of it, that he is guilty; he hath so many pretences, so many shifts. This covetousness it doth shelter itself under honest names. It is sometimes thought to be diligence, prudence, and forecast; cautiousness, wariness, and good-husbandry. So often do men ruin themselves by entertaining this viper under gilded names, under another name and notion.

I will now make some discovery of it; and tho' I cannot discover it in all its practices and degrees; yet I shall do you some service in discovering that,

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which is in any degree gross, destructive to religion and against reason and conscience ; and for that I will go this way to work, to shew you what in our Saviour's sense is opposite to the spirit of covetousness, For I am of opinion, that our Saviour in his beatitudes, hath one of them that he doth direct expressly against the sin of covetousness, (tho' it hath been alienated from the sense, by the generality of interpreters,) and that is this, *blessed are the poor in spirit*. I am very well aware, our divines have put another sense upon these words ; but that which the interpreters do fasten upon this, hath place elsewhere, and therefore, if it be here, it is super-numerary. I heartily close with their sense, but that that they fasten upon this, I find it elsewhere in the 5th verse, *blessed are the meek*. But I take this according to the letter, the word in the greek is emphatical, they that are satisfied with mean and ordinary things : for this you must know, that a man may be *poor in spirit*, and yet have a competency ; and a man may be poor in estate, and yet covetous in heart. You may have a rich man that hath an affluent estate, poor in spirit ; and you may have the meanest man alive covetous in heart, by immoderate and inordinate desires : for a man may have an unsatiable desire in a low and mean condition. So that let not poor men think that they are out of danger : for he is *poor in spirit*, that hath his mind loose to, or above the world. I find interpreters generally understand by it, dejection, humility of mind, and contempt of ourselves. And so they make it comply with these scriptures. *The Lord is*

nigh to the broken heart and contrite spirit, Psal. xxxiv.

18. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word, Is. lvii. 15. and lxvi. 2.* I believe these have a place in the number of our Saviour's beatitudes in another verse; *blessed are the meek.* Now this same meekness doth not only import gentleness, sweetness of behaviour and affability towards men, but also every degree of humility and subjection toward God. But this other, *poor in spirit*, I interpret of men, who though they have great estates, they have moderate desires, and do not run out into an inordinacy. I know the church of Rome produceth this place for a device of their own, for one of the three vows, the vow of poverty, which they say, with the vows of a single life, and regular obedience, makes up a state of perfection. This therefore I account to be true poverty of spirit, if a man have the world's good, and yet his heart leans not to it: if he have it not, he hath no inordinate desire of it; a disposition of mind so equally settled, as not to affect worldly pomp, or state, or greatness, or revenue; not to be under the command of the *lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life*, 1 John ii. 16. which in St. John's language is the account of the *world*. He may be *poor in spirit*, tho' he hath an abundance of wealth and honour, who is a man of moderate desires, and is satisfied with those things which God hath given him; and may be poorer, in this respect, than the lowest beggar, who hath unsatiable desires of riches, and an affectation of *power, command, and wealth*: for he is *poor in spirit*,

rit, tho' he hath an affluent estate, and can command the *world* ; if his mind stand right, and he be loose to *it*, and above *it*, as to any trust and confidence in *it*. And *he* that hath but from hand to mouth, yet if he hath inordinate desires, tho' he be a beggar, he is covetous. — By *poverty of spirit*, I do understand, a kind of want of affection to the world ; a disposition of mind spiritually steered ; so as not to decline to the wealth and pomp of the world ; looking upon them, as *means* : and not giving them the honour, nor at all placing them in the room of *ends*. So that if a man hath the world's good, and yet in his heart he leans not to it, nor doth he estimate himself by it ; and if, having it not, he doth not so thirst after it as to do any thing exorbitant to get it ; or if he have lost it, he is not so moved at the loss, as to be disquieted at it : so that assure yourselves a man may be rich in outward wealth, and yet poor in spirit ; if he doth not love it and estimate himself by it : and he may be the contrary, though in a low condition and poor in outward estate, if he be of an unsatiable appetite, if he desire them : poor he may be, and have but little in the world, and yet not *poor in spirit*, not poor, with a holy will. For it is not a man's external circumstances that makes a man either virtuous or vicious, but the frame, constitution, and complexion of the mind. These poor in spirit are those that are so upon *consideration*, having considered that few of these things are necessary in life : that the happiness of man consists not in abundance of these things, and that these are but in the place of means,
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not of ends ; and therefore will not be under the power of them ; for no good man nor wise man will be subject to any thing, that hath not the rank and order of an end. I say it again ; whosoever hath the command of the world, and hath its goods in his hands, (and doth abound in wealth, honour, power, and authority) as a mean in order to an end ; this man though he be rich, may be poor in spirit ; and another, tho' poor, is covetous, if he be a man that is unsatisfied, and maintains greedy appetites, and do not acquiesce in the providence of God. He that hath inwardly, in his soul and will, upon consideration, resolved that riches, and honour, and revenue, are nothing, *but superfluous accomplishments*, (so far as they are beyond accommodations, or the notion of instruments;) he who hath in his soul, the sense our Saviour expresses, that *the life of man consists not in the abundance of things which he possesseth* ; this is the man that, tho' he be rich, is *poor in spirit*.

So that whereas *covetousness* is commonly cast only upon men of estates ; yet we find, upon examination, that the lowest sort of men are as apt to fail and miscarry, as men of estates : for it lies in the temper of a man's mind, and in the frame and disposition of his spirit. He that hath in his soul a sense, that *the happiness of man consists not in what he possesses* ; and considers that *nature is content with moderate things* ; and that these things are but means and instruments to an end, that riches are but a multitude of instruments, and that the virtue of an instrument lies in the use and exercise of it, he that

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upon consideration desires of God; as *Agur* did, give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient, Prov. xxx. 8. this man is not covetous.

But this we may observe, that sometimes upon discontent, men that are under the power of *covetousness* will pretend to high nobleness and generosity, when the world offends them; and sometimes in haste bid defiance, *adieu* to the world: so *Charles V.* emperor of *Germany*, who had done mighty things, and won many famous battles; but, when by attempting many things, he had plunged himself into multitudes of inconveniences, and brought himself into a maze which he knew not how to get out of, then he resolves to resign up all, which he doth; the *empire* to his brother, and the kingdom of *Spain* with the *Netherlands*, to his son; and to a monastery he goes. In such case we forsake not the world, but the world rather forsakes us. — As *St. Jerome* hath a good saying; the great power of renouncing the world, being loose to the world, being above the world, is shewn, when men do it voluntarily, upon consideration, not in necessity, not in anger, not in the spirit of revenge. If we would approve ourselves to be poor in spirit, and out of love with the world, let us do it when the world favours us, not when the world frowns upon us: while the world as yet follows us, and, as it were, woos us for our love, not when it is grown froward, and turns its back upon us. I intimated it to you at first, that this is a cunning and subtle vice: you see I have discovered one instance; and now another: in the church of *Rome* they are constrained who enter into religious orders,

to make a triple vow, the vow of regular obedience, poverty, and a single life ; but, alas, how little is there of the persons choice in it ! One of their own writing of the free vows, calls it *terrible votum paupertatis*. But whosoever dedicates himself to God, must in heart leave this world, and cast no longing favourable eye upon wealth, honour or preferment, but must resolve to live in converse with this world as if in society with the inhabitants of the other world.

External things do very differently and uncertainly affect the minds of men. No man knows what may be the effect of worldly prosperity or adversity. No man knows whether if he should be rich, he should be merciful ; or, if he should be afflicted, whether he should be patient. Worldly prosperity or adversity, each of them will comply with the contraries, *happiness* and *misery* ; as they are used, they either tend to *one* or the *other* ; but the operation of them is very uncertain ; therefore let us value things equally, according to their degrees of goodness. It is true indeed, worldly prosperity hath an advantage ; because he that is rich hath great opportunities of glorifying God, and doing good, having tools to work with, if God give him a heart. But if he hath not a heart to improve this advantage, he is not regenerated and sanctified ; he is not led into a divine spirit by it. And he that is in a state of adversity, and expos'd to necessity, is subject to be envious, base, and sordid. But if adversity, and a strait condition in the world, make a man *patient*, *humble* and *modest*, 'tis well ; his poverty will end much to his advantage : so that you see both of the
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one and the other, the operation is very uncertain. Therefore let no man make himself a *slave* to that which is *no part of his happiness*.

But men are thought to talk of *strange riddles*, that tell men they must not have inordinate desires to *wealth*, they must not estimate and value themselves by it ; nor by *state, dignity, place, and power*. He that talks thus to men, will be in danger to be looked upon as *Lot* was by his sons in law, speaking to them about leaving *Sodom*, to speak as *one that mocked*, Gen. xix. 14.

He who finds in himself *inclinations* towards the world, *desires* to grow rich, to raise himself in *honour*, and *preferment* ; let him suspect himself : it is great wisdom, in matters of danger, to fear even things that are safe : for it is a good rule *casuists* go upon in the court of conscience, that *it is safer for men to suppose a fault, than no fault*. In the court of conscience, censure and search the secret *passages* and *inclinations* of the heart.

Riches are often mentioned in scripture ; but seldom spoke well of : nor ever do we find that the rich are declared to be *blessed*, but I find it to be said that they *hardly enter into the kingdom of God*, Mat. xix. 23. which if we did consider, would make us suspect, and look about us. Scripture warns us, *not to trust to uncertain riches* ; not to heap up superfluous parts of them ; but to lay a good foundation, that our hearts be not overcharged with the cares of this life. St. *Austin* says, “ That if it had
“ been happiness to have loved the world, and the
“ things of it ; *that man* would have loved them,
“ who

“ who was the *Son of God*.” But our Saviour affected neither command, nor authority, nor estate, nor applause ; our Saviour’s worldly circumstances may make us think the worse of secular pomp and bravery : for that he was in such circumstances, was not by chance but choice. We find that the apostles write after his copy. For what one act of theirs did discover looking towards the world, excepting only as to provision for necessary maintenance ? Now if they were in such a conjunction with happiness, why should our Saviour so much overlook them, and the apostles write after his copy ? for we find them not solicitous after more than necessary accommodations. — The heathen philosophers profess’d, and greatly practis’d contempt of the world. I read in the *Roman* story of a statesman that had been no less than a dictator ; he was grievously censured for having but one piece of plate. Now it is a horrible reproach, and condemnation to us, if the *faith of the gospel* should not attain such effects as the *principles of nature*, through reason in conjunction with infidelity, have attained.

If, through the help of divine grace, we do not alienate ourselves from the love of the things of the world, the love of them will certainly alienate us from God. If no trust and confidence in them, there will be no inordinacy toward them ; which where it is, the heart will be stolen from God. Now to resolve you, what is it, that is the height, excellency, and utmost perfection of that which we call *the worship of God* ? Is it not *to take him for our happiness, and utmost end* ? *To make him the center of*

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*our souls ? To have all expectation from him, and dependence upon him ? And can we do this, and impatiently thirst after riches ? can you do this, while you are solicitous after the world, and have a dependence upon your estates, power or place ? Confidence and trust in God, is the worthiest part of divine worship : for none acknowledges God more than he that relies upon him, depends on him, commits himself unto him, trusts in him, and is not anxious what the next day may produce. Now if we give any of *these* affections to, if we put this trust, and confidence, and dependence in our *estate, riches, honour, or the like*, we put *them* in the place of *God* : and upon this account *covetousness* is called *idolatry*. This may well be called *an indignity to God*, if we think to depend upon our estate, power, and authority ; whereas we are to rest in him, as the center of immortal souls. Wherefore that *desire of riches*, and that *care* which is laid out about them, which doth debase our dependence upon God, and takes us off from our affiance and trust in him (wherein we do truly worship and acknowledge him) may well be called *idolatry*, Col. iii. 5.*

Nothing is more base in the church of *Rome*, than the subordinating the christian religion to the gain of the world : for my part, nothing in the church of *Rome* doth so much grieve me, as to see men so base as to practise upon religion, and lay worldly designs. For superstition (if it be by mistake) there may be an apology : but when men name *God*, speak *religion and conscience*, and mean *the world* ; this is so far from being religion, that it is abominable.

nable. What are their principles, but *the foundation of revenue*? What vast sums do they acquire by their doctrines of purgatory, of indulgence, and absolution? *But the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith,* 1 Tim. vi. 10. This is to prostitute religion; and *that* wherein the honour of God, and the salvation of mens souls is concerned, is subordinated to the things of *this world*; whereas there is no *philosophy* or *discipline* doth more strongly cry it down, and endeavour to plant in men *contempt of it*, than christianity hath done? But, by this *sect* of christians, *christianity* is constrained to lackey to the world, and to become means of the greatest secular pomp and bravery, that ever the sun hath seen. *Erasmus*, writing upon the story of St. *Peter's* mean entertainment by *Simon the tanner*, observes, that now the palaces of emperors, and courts of kings are not sufficient for St. *Peter's* successors.

Where we see religion made a *mean* to draw on the world; out of doubt it is not *religion*, but *hypocrisy*: for the distribution of the things of the world, who shall have more, who less, belongs not to the kingdom of Christ. We are directed by our Saviour's form of prayer, to pray for *daily bread*, in contradistinction to praying for *riches, honour, pleasures*.

You have seen in general, by way of explication, what this *temper of covetousness* is; and that a rich man may be freed from it, and a poor man may be deeply in this vice; and that it lies in a man's judgment, and the temper of his mind, and his inclinations. He that is of *ungovern'd appetites*, he that

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hath a high opinion of these things, (viz. riches, honours, pleasures,) and thinks them to be other than they are, or places them in the room of ends; this is the man that is guilty.

But I consider *generals* do not affect; and this being a business of *practice*, and every man's concern, as he would secure the state of his soul to eternity, to quit and discharge himself of this covetous temper and disposition, as that which doth displace God in the throne of man's soul, which the scripture represents as *the enemy* of religion; I will instance in *five particulars*, by which every man may know *whether he be guilty of this vice or not*.

First, Whosoever is a person of *eager*, inordinate, and ungoverned appetites; and therefore doth not satisfy himself with the disposition of divine providence in respect of himself, which providence doth furnish him with conveniences and accommodations of life. If not satisfied therein, he is covetous.

Secondly, Who having enough for necessary use, and purposes of life, fears to spend; he covets rather to *have* than to use, he doth even grudge to himself things fitting, he hath not power to use himself kindly in the world. This man is covetous.

Thirdly, Who makes himself a drudge in the world, toils day and night; breaks his sleep through inordinate care: he is so extremely busy, so over-employed, as not to be at leisure duly to attend upon God in the world.

Fourthly, Who through his base love of money, as if it were conjoined with his very being, hath
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not power of equal consideration, in his dealing with others ; but insists to the utmost upon all points of advantage, and strict right ; affording no abatement, no allowance for the several contingencies that beset men.

Fifthly, Who over-rules principles of reason and conscience, and useth all means to become rich, without difference, or distinction ; right or wrong, lawful or unlawful. This man is prodigiously covetous : this is covetousness in the highest degree.

Of these five I will speak, and by these every man may try himself. I begin at the lowest degree, and still in the several particulars, rise one step higher.

First, Whosoever he is, being a person of eager, inordinate, ungoverned appetites, that doth not satisfy himself with the dispensations of providence, concerning himself ; furnishing him with competent and moderate things, the conveniencies and accommodations of life, but more he would have ; this man is certainly covetous. This is that the *Psalmist* calls, *meat for mens lusts*, Psal. lxxviii. 18. Whatsoever is more than fit, convenient and necessary, and is the effect of the ordinary disposition of providence toward a man ; if a man will not be content, and satisfied, and thank God for it, he desires *meat for his lusts*. Every man is to be satisfied with that which providence bestows on him, if it be competent, if it will satisfy nature, whose desires are few : and if he be not satisfied, he is covetous. This was the temper of *Rachel*, *give me children or else I die*, Gen. xxx. 1. See what follows, she had children, and is the first person

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that died in child-bed. The life of man doth not consist in the abundance he doth enjoy; and to think otherwise, this is expressly contrary to the apostle's rule: *Phil. iv. 11. I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* And in *1 Tim. vi. 6, 7. But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.* And since we are to carry nothing out, why should any man desire more than will serve his turn? And verse 8, 9, 10. *And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content: but they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition: for the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* The like we have in *Heb. xiii. 4. Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* And pray observe, he there gives a general reason, and quotes a speech spoken to *Joshua, Josh. i. 5.* which offers this, if we do what is reasonable, and according to our station, God looks upon himself as concerned to do that for us, which is answerable to his relation to us. This I observe from these words, and this is the first, men of eager, inordinate, ungoverned appetites are covetous.

Secondly, Who having enough for necessary uses, fears to spend, and grudges himself things fitting, he is covetous. One would think there were no such men; but *Solomon* hath told us *there is one a-*

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lone, and there is not a second ; yea he hath neither
child, nor brother ; yet is there no end of all his labour,
neither is his eye satisfied with riches, neither saith he,
for whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good ?
Eccl. iv. 8. This man is wanting to himself, pinches
himself, and is wanting to *publick* occasions : for
the publick is every man's particular ; for, if it be
not every body's charge, it is no body's. There are
partly a man's friends, partly his relations, his neigh-
bours, and companions : a man must not be want-
ing to all these ; for they have a share in him. He
therefore that allows not himself the free and gene-
rous and noble use of what he hath, this man is a
slave to his money, and is of a covetous disposition :
he hath, but he hath not the *power of use*.

Thirdly, Who makes himself a drudge in the world,
tolls day and night ; breaks his sleep through in-
ordinate care ; is so extremely busy, so over em-
ployed, as not to be at leisure duly to attend upon
God in the world, to make acknowledgments to
him, or to discharge himself in duty to him. Man's
principles teach him, that it is *main* and *principal*
in the life of man, that intellectual nature do per-
form special duty and service to God. Nothing is
more horrid, than for intellectual nature, degenerat-
ing into matters of sense, not to take notice or cog-
nizance of God ; not to perform duty to him. This
man is therefore *sordidly covetous*, who makes him-
self a drudge in the world, disquiets himself, is so per-
plexed in business, that God is not in all his thoughts,
is very little to him in the world : this man is pro-
digiously covetous, that so racks himself with care

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to get the things of this world, that he forgets God. We are indeed to use diligence, and moderate care : For, *he that doth not provide for his family, is worse than an infidel*, 1 Tim. v. 8. We should not give way, therefore, to a lazy, sluggish disposition, for he that will not labour, is not so much as the object of any man's charity, 2 Thes. iii. 10. So that I take not any man off from his particular employment from being diligent in any particular way. But we are not to make our rational faculties *Gibeonites*, nor determine them to *hew wood and draw water*. To drudge in the world, is not the adequate employment of an intellectual nature : this is not that which doth employ the highest and noblest part of man. It is indispensibly necessary, that *mind and understanding*, which is a peculiar reserved faculty *for*, and appropriated *to* God, be employed about things immaterial ; making enquiry of God ; tendering duty toward him ; expressing itself in all devotion, and affection toward him. This I am sure is so certain, that nothing is more, that there is no *happiness* to man, but in this relation, and in converse with God and things immaterial, and intellectual ; because else there is no rational satisfaction : and there is no *happiness* where there is not *rational satisfaction* ; for otherwise there is tediousness, weariness, and (in over-long use) nauseousness. There is no such reproach, as to say, that a man is wise, witty, sagacious for worldly things ; and yet ignorant in matters of religion, reason, and conscience. Therefore for men to depress their noble powers and faculties, and make their adequate em-

ployment in the drudgeries of the world, this is fordid and base.

Fourthly, Who through base love of money (as if it were conjoined with his very being) hath not power of equal consideration, in his dealings with others, but insists, to the utmost, upon all points of advantage upon all terms of *strict right*; affording no allowance nor abatement for the *unexpected contingencies* which befall men in the several occasions of life. For, notwithstanding any bargain whatsoever, if there be incidencies and contingencies, which rationally were not imaginable, or thought of; he that hath another under obligation, if he make not allowance, he is an oppressor: for, since the government of the world is not in our hands; since we are not masters of all affairs; since there are contingencies beyond reason, or the power or wisdom of any finite creature; it becomes every man that hath advantage, fairly to consider, and to make equal allowance for unavoidable casualties, and contingencies: for, I am sure, this man that doth otherwise, doth not at all partake of God, nor write after his copy, who hath magnified his *mercy* above all his other names; who fails not to commiserate in every compassionate case. To *this man*, who affords hard measure, without relenting, or after-consideration, all other men are but means and instruments to his ends and purposes: and so they be but obtained, it matters not what becomes of others. This man violates the golden rule of charity, *to do to others as we would have done to us*. His sense is, *if I am a loser, no matter what comes of things*. He matters

matters not what becomes of the world, so he have his end. In this case self is predominant ; and this man is *prodigiously selfish and covetous* : all other considerations are subservient thereto.

Fifthly, Who doth over-rule principles of reason, religion and conscience, and takes *all courses*, uses all *means* to become rich, without difference or distinction ; without consideration, whether right or wrong, just or unjust, lawful or unlawful ; 'tis all one to him. This man is informed, led, and acted by *the spirit of covetousness*. This man is covetous in the highest degree ; covetousness in this man is *regnant and triumphant*. *He hasteth to be rich*, so *will not be innocent*, Prov. xxviii. 20. But falls into many snares and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition ; for he hath power to subordinate God, religion, conscience, and whatsoever is sacred to worldly profit ; as *Judas*, who sold his master ; *Balaam*, who loved the ways of unrighteousness : the *Pharisees*, who were covetous, (*Luke* xvi. 14.) and devoured widows houses, (*Luke* xx. 47.) *Ahab* to get *Naboth's* vineyard, (*1 Kings* xxi. 1, &c.) was guilty of subornation and murder.

By these *five* may every man judge of himself. I began with the least degree, and still rose every step higher. He is not covetous, that can acquit himself of not being guilty in these : and this every man is highly concerned to do.

Now a word of *inference*. The exhortation is, that we endeavour to refine, ennoble and spiritualize our tempers ; that is, let every person universalize himself ; that is, let every particular person

employ himself, as he hath time and opportunity, in things that tend to God's honour and glory in the world, and to the *publick good*. Let not men satisfy themselves to do as *snails*, that live and confine themselves in their shells, and carry their house up and down on their backs, wherever they go : it doth not become any man that is endued with intellectual nature, to be so particular and selfish. Every man is to think, that the honour of God, the publick good, and the advance of human nature, ought to be predominant, ought to counterbalance, and over-rule his particular concernment. Let us keep from all sordidness of mind, by coming under the power of the world. No worldly thing is to exercise any sovereignty over us : neither should a man center himself in himself. To this purpose I propose the consideration of three things. *First*, The dignity, value and worth of our precious and immortal souls. *Secondly*, The undervalue of all things in the world, in competition. *Thirdly*, The *reference* of the affairs of time to eternity : for upon that account the transactions of time, are most considerable. To do otherwise imports three horrid deformities. *First*, A subordination of mind to body ; which is more prodigious, than if the sun should cease to shine, and fill the world with stench and darkness. *Secondly*, It imports the preference of transitories and perishables before immortals and incorruptibles ; and this is child-like, to prefer pebbles before pearls. *Thirdly*, It doth import the supposing the consequence of *this state*, to be before, and beyond the *other state*, the state of eternity, and that

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that is madness so to do. Now none of these three any one will be guilty of, unless he be either stupid as never awakened to any competency of judgment ; and then he is inconsiderable, he is not able to give a voice, or suffrage ; he is not valuable in the order of human nature : for he doth not act by the principles of human nature ; or else he is drowned in sensualities and brutishness ; and then he is worse : for the former is by neglect, this is by abuse : or, thirdly, He is under a principle of *affected atheism* ; that he may not be under the obligations of reason, religion and conscience. Now if we will not own the state and principles of these men, let us not degenerate with them in practice.

It is greatly to the shame of human nature, that we seem rather to love God, for *what he is to us*, than for what he is *in himself*. We love him, because he may be good to us ; rather than because he is the most lovely object in himself, *the first and chiefest goodness* : rather as he is necessary to our happiness ; than because of his own loveliness, excellency, and beauty. Therefore we consider ourselves even there, where we mind God. Now till our love of God be most simple and refined we must acknowledge in it an alloy and mixture of earthliness and dissingenuity ; we must acknowledge it an affection short and unworthy of God, who is the first excellency, the proper object, and attractive of admiration, and veneration. We should be wholly taken with God, possess'd and transported with him : the contemplation and thought of his excellency, goodness, and perfection, should so fill our souls,

souls, that foreign things should be driven away, and be as it were *nothing*, in this order and competition. Our souls should go out in secret enquiry after God ; should ingulph and bottom themselves in him, by love and by delight. We should dwell with him ; never fall from him, or sink below him or take ought else for him ; or return from him to any embraces. It should be the language of our souls in the ears of our God, *whom have I in heaven but thee, or what is there in earth that I desire besides thee ?* Psal. lxxiii. 25. Tho' a man should love God, with an equal degree of affection to the things of this world ; yet, because the objects are so infinitely disproportionable (and 'tis the nature of *moral duties* to be measured from those motives by which we are to be induced to them ;) therefore, of such a one it may be affirmed, that he doth not love God. He that makes him but equal to any worldly thing, may be said infinitely to despise and undervalue him.

For the further explication of this, I shall suggest to you a distinction, not commonly (if at all) taken notice of by others ; betwixt *natural principles* and *moral duties* ; the misunderstanding of which is the occasion of many difficulties and confusions about this and some other points.——By *natural principles*, I mean such kind of impressions as are originally stamped upon the nature of things, whereby they are fitted for those services to which they are designed in their creation ; the acts of which are *necessary*, and under no kind of liberty of being suspended. All things must work according to their

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natural principles (nor can they do otherwise,) as heavy bodies must tend downwards. The beauty of the world, and the wisdom of the creation, is generally acknowledged to consist in *this*, that God was pleased to endue the kinds of things with such natures and principles, as might accommodate them for those works to which they were appointed: and he governs all things by such laws, as are suited to those several natures, which he at first implanted in them. The most universal principle belonging to all kind of things, is *self-preservation*; which, in *man*, being a rational agent, is somewhat farther advanced to strong propensions and desires of the soul after a state of happiness, which hath the predominancy over all other inclinations; as being the supreme and ultimate end to which all his designs and actions must be subservient by a natural *necessity*.

——Whereas, on the other hand, those rules or means, which are most proper for the attaining of this end, about which we have a liberty of acting; to which men are to be induced in a *moral way*, by such kind of motives or arguments as are in themselves sufficient to convince the reason; *these* I call *moral duties*: *duties*, as deriving their obligation from their conducibility to their promoting of our chief end; and *moral*, as depending upon moral motives. So that *self-love*, and *the proposing of happiness as our chief end*, tho' it be the foundation of duty, that *basis*, or *substratum*, upon which the law is founded; yet it is not properly a *moral duty*, about which men have a liberty of acting: they *must* do so; nor can they do otherwise. The most vile
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and profligate wretches that are, who are most opposite to that which is their true happiness, they are not against *happiness itself*; but they mistake about it, and erroneously substitute something else in the room of it. So that if men were upon all accounts firmly convinced, that God was their chief happiness; they would almost as necessarily love him, as hungry men do eat, or thirsty men do drink.— I have enlarged the more on this particular, the better to manifest the true cause, or ground of this love to God,

Being filled with all unrighteousness, &c. vers. 29. I have but one thing more, and I have done; for I do not mean to spend my time in raking into this sink, this dunghill. But this one thing give me leave to take notice of, that *ill-will* is characterized under no fewer titles than *twelve*. Observe *here* (where the apostle reckons up the horrid and desperate apostacy of men that abuse nature, and live in opposition to God, in all contradiction to reason, religion, and conscience) how many titles and places, one sort of iniquity doth take up, all of a nature, quality, and sort; *being filled with all unrighteousness,——maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate,——malignity; whisperers* (these are all of a nature and quality) *backbiters, haters of God, despiteful,——inventers of evil things,——implacable, unmerciful,——* so that *two thirds* of these malign characters lie upon this, the want of charity, love, and good will, humanity, good affection, doing that which is worthy of human nature: for, this is connatural and inherent to every species, to consult

sult the good of those that are of the same kind. No species of things doth prey upon it's own kind. From hence I observe, by how many titles ill-will is characterized ; how many ways men sin against charity.

The scripture lays much of the stress of religion upon the principle of *good nature*, and the *charitable disposition*. *If thou lovest not thy brother whom thou hast seen, how canst thou once think thou lovest God whom thou hast not seen ?* 1 John iv. 20. I will give account why scripture doth so.

1st, It is of principal use in subservience to God's government in the world. If this principle of *good nature* and *good will* were general, there would be no difficulty in government. The greatest difficulty of government, either in the hands of God, or of his instruments, is occasioned from the perverseness, the frowardness, wrathfulness, and devilishness, of men, one to another : for, if there were but a principle of *good nature* and *good will*, if men did but to others, as they would have others do to them, government would find an easy discharge. No wonder then that scripture lays such stress upon *this* disposition.

2^{dly}, It is the expression of our resentment of God's kindness, compassion, and goodness to us, in pardoning us in *Jesus Christ*, which is God's fullest communication to the world. *They* that maintain the principle of *good nature*, and those that are willing to relieve, gratify, and supply ; are the representatives of God in the world. *These* are under the fullest communications of God : and *these* are, in their measure

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measure and degree, what God is, in his height,
excellency and fulness. Great reason therefore that
scripture should lay such great stress upon *this* prin-
ciple of good nature.

3dly, Unless we be exercised in the practice of
it *here*, we shall be nowise qualified to become
citizens of the heavenly *Jerusalem* hereafter: and
since it is the utmost improvement to be charitable,
and a necessary preparation, and qualification, for
the entrance of a soul, in the state of eternity, un-
to glory; we shall not wonder why the scripture
doth so insist upon it; and that in this catalogue of
miscarriages, where there be eighteen titles or
names, the miscarriage in this instance of love and
goodwill supplies twelve. Unless we be discharged
of *ill-will*; unless we be freed from *ill-nature*, we
cannot have admittance or entrance into the
heavenly *Jerusalem*. For, we should be a distur-
bance to that happy society.

The pleasures of eternity are mental, intellec-
tual and satisfactory, without molestation or con-
test.—An uncharitable christianity, unmerciful,
void of good-nature, is no more *religion*, than a
dark sun is a sun, or a *cold fire is fire*.——*He only*
can dwell in God who dwells in love, 1 John iv. 16.
If we would at all resemble God, partake of his na-
ture; or be, in any degree such as he is; we must
root out of our natures all malignity, envy, malice,
rancour, spite, displeasure. To be out of love and
good-will, is to be in the devil's form and spirit.
A christian must not be an enemy. 'Tis not compa-
tible with christianity to bear ill-will, or (as we say)

to carry coals. — Frowardness, peevishness, mal-contentedness are the most dangerous evils, because men warrant themselves in them, supposing that they are justifiable in it. Thus *Jonah* (*chap. iv. vers. 9.*) *I do well to be angry.* But, oft we find, upon after-consideration, not so much cause, as upon the sudden, we supposed; so, have reason to unsay, and to undo. This is frequently the case of ungoverned minds, and of cholerick constitutions. In this case, I ask these hasty furious persons; do they consider the hurt they do to themselves, when they thus dispossess themselves of themselves, so as neither to enjoy God nor themselves? — If we would be secure, we must resist the beginnings of this evil. Scripture gives us many cautions, sundry reasons, several precedents and examples, *Prov. xv. 1.* and *xvii. 14.* — Thus *Jacob's* preventing *Esau's* revenge, *Gen. xxxii.* *Abigail's* pacifying *David's* rage, *1 Sam. xxv.* so as that he blesses God for her. What mischief followed upon *Hanun's* misrepresenting *David's* intended respect? *2 Sam. x.* What, upon *Rehoboam's* churlish answer? *1 Kings xii.*

Nothing more discomposes the mind, than its own taking offence; which if it does, it is its own fault. He that conceives displeasure in his breast, carries *that* within him, which doth corrode, and torment him. — It is the unhappiness of some, that they are not born to the same good nature others are. 'Tis more *their* burden than it is to others, to be of such bad natures. I would rather converse with such as are so (tho' that be troublesome enough) than have it myself; for, then it is an evil *without me* :
if

if I have it myself, it is an *internal* malady. If it were my disposition from my infancy, I would study nothing but the moral virtues, till I had subdued it. For, what is virtue given for, but to rectify crookedness of nature? Man hath his religion to little purpose, if, by it, he doth not mend his nature, and refine his spirit. Such a one only makes a profession of it; takes a denomination from it.

There is great congruity between our well being, and the nature of things enjoined by religion. *Thy law is truth*, that is, *such as it ought to be*, Psalm cxix. 142. Submission to the things of religion, is ready, kindly, regular; because our minds are cast into the same moulds with them, framed into suitableness and conformity. We worship God best, when in our mind we are like him; when in respect of God's communicable perfections, holiness, righteousness, and goodness, we imitate and resemble him. If we would be happy as *he* is, we are to be holy as *he* is, in our measure, degree, and proportion.

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DISCOURSE LXVI.

The direful Vengeance which falls upon the Souls of incorrigible Sinners.

R o m. i. *the latter part of the 27th verse.*

— *Receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.*

THis is the last clause in this chapter, that I shall take upon me to speak to : and this containing matter of great use, and in farther assurance of the truth I have formerly spoken to, I cannot overlook it.

You may remember I have undertaken a vindication of the divine goodness and righteousness ; and have endeavoured to make it appear, that God is neither the cause of the creatures sin, nor the creatures misery : and whosoever thinks otherwise of God, doth not God so much as common right : he doth not say so much of God, as one would think it fit to speak of a man of common honesty and uprightness. This portion of scripture will give me great advantage to pursue this truth, that God is not to be charged with the creatures sin, or the creatures misery. For whosoever suffers or is punished, he doth but *receive in himself, or from himself, that recompence of his error which is meet.* The greatest suffering that is, is not by any *positive* infliction of God,

God, it is not of God's creation : for God did not *make* hell, but it is the natural issue of creatures miscarriage, being wanting to themselves, and contradicting the principles of God's creation in them : and if this be true, I have at once said enough to justify God's goodness, righteousness, and holiness ; and to stop the mouth of all gainstayers ; and I have said enough to justify all the principles of religion. There is a foundation laid of self-condemnation to all evil doers. It is a form of words, that, when I well considered them, I could not overlook them *that sinners do receive in (or from) themselves the recompence of their error*. No one that fails or miscarries comes to misery by any sovereignty, any foreign pleasure, any thing that is arbitrary, any thing that is in itself unavoidable. But the misery that befalls the creation of God, is of ourselves, it ariseth from within ; sinners destroy themselves. Men shall not be able finally to fly in God's face, and to challenge him either with neglect or hard measure ; for all that perish shall be self-condemned ; and it will finally be made to appear, that whosoever is lost, or perisheth, it is through his own self-neglect, or the great abuse of himself.

But I am very well aware that it hath been a very old practice, for men to charge God with the ill-fare of men, that they might excuse themselves, and lay the fault upon God. The whole eighteenth chapter of *Ezekiel* is spent upon this occasion ; and God by the prophet doth there vindicate himself ; and the prophet in the name of God doth plainly assert, that God is no contriver of, nor *hath any*

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pleasure in the death of a sinner, but that he hath done what infinite wisdom hath thought fit, to divert him from sin, and thereby to keep him from misery. Where men are voluntary as to the *antecedent* in doing amiss, they charge God with that which is the natural *consequent*, the punishment that follows : for this is most certain, the greatest punishment of sin is inherent in itself : for tho' almighty power let a sinner alone, he would be his own destroyer.

I shall be able from this text to clear God, and lay the fault at our own door : I may in this case say, as the apostle saith in *Rom. iii. 4.* in another case, *let God be true, and every man a liar.* In this particular : let God be justified, as the lover of his creatures, as the friend of souls ; but every one that perisheth, be accounted the author of his own misery. So true it is what the prophet saith, *Hosea xiii. 9. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self.* Our greatest hurt is within us, from ourselves : whosoever is hurt, is hurt by himself : inordinate appetite is a punishment to itself. Now this appears thus, by an account of three of the greatest evils that we are capable of, and that we ly under ; guilt in the conscience ; malignity and naughtiness in the mind ; a sickly, diseased, distempered body. Let any name an evil that may befall human nature, that is equal to these.

For the *first* of these, *guilt* in the conscience. Now guilt in conscience is only consequent upon known and voluntary acts ; when they are irregular, unnatural, monstrous, contrary to the order of reason ; so contrary to the nature of man, as man is

a man ; which is the great rule, and notion of deformity : and there can no guilt come upon any man's conscience but this way : it is consequent upon his own knowing, and voluntary acts, when they are irregular, unnatural, contrary to the order of reason, contrary to the nature of man, as man is a man : if he doth contrary to these, then he is guilty ; for this we may conclude, that no foreign power whatsoever, not the almighty power of God, nor the power of angels, nor the power of all the men in the world, can make any person in the world guilty, unless he doth consent to an evil action. No man can be guilty, but by his own knowing and voluntary consent ; for if we consent not, 'tis not our act. Guilt befalls only moral acts, therefore this great evil of guilt in his conscience is his own product : and God hath no hand at all in it ; but man is the sole cause himself. For be he tempted never so much, if he be not voluntary in consent, he cannot contract guilt in his conscience. This is the first evil, and this depends upon a man's self ; and no external power can be the cause of guilt upon any man's conscience. For if a man be not intelligent and voluntary ; what he doth is not a human act, it doth not proceed from judgment, and choice ; and therefore it is not imputed to him.

But, *secondly*, malignity and naughtiness of disposition in the mind is a second misery of man. Now this malignity and naughtiness of disposition is moral pravity, deformity, and privation ; and therefore it cannot be natural, but must be acquired : for
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this is a certain rule, nothing moral can be by generation, but must be by acts, use, custom and practice. Nothing but what is purely natural can be in a man by traduction and propagation. We are not born with *habits*, but born only with *faculties*. This is so far true, that any bodily disposition, or inclination, which is not acquired, tho' it be to good, or to evil, it is neither a *vice*, if it be a tendency to evil; nor a *virtue*, if it be a tendency to good, neither fully *in specie vitii aut virtutis*; for nothing is *virtue*, but what is *the product of a mind actually considering, and a man's choice upon deliberation and consideration*: and so nothing amounts unto the degree of vice, but in the same manner: only a man may be wicked by failure, and neglect: because a man is to use the principles of God's creation; he is to consider, and he is to make use of his reason; and *that* is first to be set on work, to discover the way, and to discern the difference of things. Sure I am, that God cannot in the least be charged as the cause of the naughtiness of any man's mind; neither can it be otherwise than from the man's self: it is most true in respect of every man's internal state; *every man hath himself for temper, for disposition, for complexion, and constitution of soul, according as he hath considered, examined, and used himself*. Now, if a man *hath himself as he uses himself*; then, whosoever is in perverseness and malignity of mind, he hath brought himself into it, by abuse of himself. Whosoever is in a naughty and malignant disposition of mind, there is no creature under heaven, nor nothing that is in being, that brought

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him into that temper ; but either his gross self-neglect, or voluntary self-abuse. And if there be gross self-neglect, he hath not acted according to his principles, he hath not then made use of the principles of God's creation in him ; and if he have abused himself, whose fault is that ? Whatsoever is not of a man's self, it may be his burden, but it never is his fault ; nor never is charged upon him on a moral account. That is the second. Then

Thirdly, For a sickly, diseased, distempered body. That is the third evil I instanced in. For this I will grant in the first place, that a man may have a weak body, and unhappy constitution, he may be born to it, without his own fault ; whence some die so soon, and others are so sickly : but *there are things* that are in our power, mischievous to our bodies : I will single out three sorts of vices ; pride, envy, and malice ; intemperance and wantonness ; idleness, laziness, and sloth : these three vices spoil the body. Of these men we may truly say with the apostle, *they sin against their own bodies*. 1 Cor. vi. 18.

1st, For pride, envy, and malice. They that are proud, envious, and malicious, they frequently are in discontent. Now discontent doth macerate the body, and melancholizes the blood. Now if any man will be offended, he shall be offended every day : for this world is a very uncertain and unequal thing, and so affords frequent matter of offence to this temper. The proud and conceited man, he never hath respect or esteem enough ; he is not valued by others, according as he esteems himself. No man thinks so well of him, as he thinks of himself ;
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and therefore he is necessarily aggrieved at every man, and lives in discontent : he is seldom satisfied, but is apt to interpret every man's behaviour toward him, neglect at least, if not affront. You have this temper well expressed in the temper of *Haman* to *Mordecai*, who is dispossessed of all his enjoyments, because *Mordecai* offends him ; so is in perpetual discontent : and if a man is in discontent, he doth not only mar the temper of his mind, but hurts his body. The envious, and malicious are aggrieved at every body's good, but their own : they cannot be satisfied though God be good to them ; but this is their offence, that God is good to others as well as to them ; they cannot enjoy the comforts they might enjoy, because others have the same. Now I take it for granted, whosoever leads a grumbling, and a repining life, as envy, and malice makes men to live ; this man's life is a lingering and pining death. If you will not believe me, look, *Job v. 2. for wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.* And *Solomon* in *Prov. xiv. 30. a sound heart is the life of the flesh, but envy the rottenness of the bones* : whereas it is said of charity, *1 Cor. xiii. 4. charity suffereth long; and is kind, charity envieth not.* One in whom principles that are solid and sincere do govern, he that is in use of sober reason and understanding, this man is of a sound heart. Now we have not more sense of any thing in this world, than that to live in good will, is to live at heart's-ease and great content. What great content have they that live in universal love ? in reconciliation with God and the whole creation ? They are offended at no body, they re-

joyce at any good that befalls any creature whatsoever. What should bear the infirmities of the body, but the courage and resolution of the mind? Wherefore those distempers, pride, envy, and malice, hurt the body: and if men do their bodies mischief, upon this occasion, is God to be charged? No, it is themselves.

2dly, *Intemperance and wantonness*: these bring our bodies to noisom, filthy, loathsome diseases; sometimes even to rottenness, while our souls inform them. Those that live in these vices, *sin against their own bodies*; dishonour themselves, make themselves vile, and expose themselves to contempt and scorn, and make their bodies unfit tabernacles for their souls to dwell in. They alienate their bodies from their proper use: for what is the proper use of the body, but to be as the tool and instrument of our mind, in the engagement and service of virtue? Now these men quite spoil their bodies. The poet livelily describes the effect of that intemperance we call drunkenness, aches in the head, nauseousness in the stomach, drought in the throat, langour in all the parts, folly and fury in the mind, a fever in the whole. Now all these are avoided, where there is due self government, and where men take upon them to order their affairs according to the dictates of true and sober reason. But if men lay reason aside, and give themselves up to absurd compliance; if once they transgress the principles of reason, and abuse the principles of their minds, they abuse and spoil their bodies.

3dly,

3dly, By *idleness* and *sloth*, which are also our bodies enemies ; for those bodies, thro' idleness and sloth come to putrify, as water in ponds, by stagnancy. The security of the natural state, and perfection of every thing, is by motion and action. The air we breath in, without ventilation, it could not retain it's purity ; without agitation and motion water becomes noisome. In like manner ; by idleness, laziness and sloth our bodies come to be vitiated. For they are deprived of their great security : and nature's remedy, the all preserving *insensible transpiration*, is advanced and maintained by motion : whereas, on the other side, *virtue*, which is the mind's due complexion, is sovereign to the body : and all the genuine and kindly operations of virtue and religion, are benign and favourable to our bodies ; and are their great security.

The wise man saith upon this account, *Pro. iii. 16. that length of days are in the right-hand of wisdom.* I take by wisdom there, to be meant reason and religion ; that that is founded in the creation of God ; length of days is secured by answering these principles, by complying with the principles of religion, sobriety, reason, and understanding: but in every deviation from these, and contradiction to reason, there is the quite contrary, *viz.* short life and diseases founded, and our very bodies are spoiled and marred.

Thus far have I given you account, that God is not to be charged with that which we ourselves are the sole cause of. I have made it appear, that we bring upon ourselves these three, which are the greatest

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greatest evils that befall the life of man : we bring them upon ourselves, and we alone. Whosoever therefore complains of his mind, that he is melancholy, because of his dissatisfaction, he cannot approve himself to his own reason. Whosoever hath contracted guilt, he himself is the author of all this mischief. Whosoever hath contracted naughtiness of mind, he himself hath brought it upon himself. And then our bodies are corrupted, vitiated and spoiled, by three sorts of vices ; pride, envy and malice ; intemperance and wantonness ; idleness and sloth. We and we alone cause guilt in our consciences. We and we alone do deform and deprave our minds. We and we alone are the causes of diseases, and the marring of our bodies ; when we are intemperate.

I will now proceed thus. Further, to prove that *miser*y is of ourselves, I will insist upon two grounds laid down by our apostle. The *first* is in the 2d. chapter of this epistle, ver. 14, 15, that man is a *law to himself* ; where the apostle asserts, that in the very state of God's creation, a man was made a law to himself : and as God made man, when he put him first out of his hands, the work of the law, the effect and purport was written in his heart. The *second* ground is taken from the verse preceeding the text ; that every sinner degenerates, and departs from the *natural use* of himself, his powers and faculties. And believe it, these two are arguments that challenge conviction, arguments beyond any possibility of reply ; man is left altogether speechless without answer or apology.

First,

First, That man was made a law to himself. Do but consider what that imports ; that man was made intelligent and apprehensive, that his very principles are a law to himself : and every law hath an obliging power. If a man be a law to himself, then he knows by the right use of his faculties, what is his duty, how he ought to behave himself to God, and how he ought to govern himself ; and then he is necessarily self-condemned if he transgress this law, and if he lives in contradiction to it ; he himself being judge : and self-condemnation is the very *life of hell*. There cannot be the work of evil, where self-condemnation is not : and if a man be self-condemned, it is not possible he should be relieved by any thing that is foreign or external. *A man a law to himself*. This is certainly true in all necessary matters ; for here a man may know without any other revelation : as that he is to live in all fear, and regard, and apprehension of God ; that he is to govern himself according to rules of reason, sobriety and temperance ; and deal with his fellow-creatures, according to rules of equity and justice : so, that what the apostle speaks of the word of faith, after-revelation, I will here speak also of the truth that is knowable by natural light. *But the righteousness that is of faith speaketh on this wise ; say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven, that is, to bring Christ down from above ? Or who shall descend to the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead ? But what saith it ? the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, and that is the word of faith which we preach, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8.* This
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is true much more of the principles of God's creation in us, which belongs to our very make. Let a man look within himself, let him awaken and excite his naturals ; use, employ, and improve his faculties, he shall come to know what is good, just, fit and right. With the good God's assistance (who is universally to be acknowledged) we may come to see, know, understand and do. This I take for granted, that at least a man that is made to the perfection of reason and understanding, is as able to act to the height of reason and understanding, as any sensitive or vegetative in the world is able to act according to their principles ; and we observe, that all the lower agents act according to their nature, and fail not if they meet not with foreign disturbance and impediment, which they cannot overcome. And can any one think that reason and understanding in man is not as sufficient and certain for its effects, as those below ? Man, by virtue of his nature and principles is certainly as sufficient and proportionate to acts of reason, as an inferior nature is to acts homogenous to itself. And this will be man's condemnation, varying from the principles that God made him to consist of. Man out of the way of right and reason, is a monster, a prodigy ; is in a state of delinquency and deformity ; and doth not return to himself, but by revocation of what is unduly done, and unless renewed by repentance ; otherwise he remains under self-condemnation ; so cannot but be miserable : for nothing can be miserable, otherwise than by being in an unnatural estate, This is the first account I give you, that God when
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He made man, made him to consist of such principles, that he *was a law given to himself*, and if he varied from this law of his creation, he must be self-condemned, and if self-condemned, unavoidably miserable.

The *second* is, that men *leave, or change the natural use*. Great sinners leave the natural use, therefore they are in a state of violence : and nothing is happy in a violent state. The propensions and inclinations of the powers and faculties of our natures are not controuled without great violence offered to ourselves, and a great affront given to God. I instance in three things horribly irreligious, and that are in contradiction to all you call reason, judgment and understanding ; and whosoever is guilty of them, it is apparent he *leaves or changes the natural use*.

1. It is degenerate, horrid, monstrous, and unnatural, as any thing possibly can be, for an intelligent agent such as man is, to *live without God in the world*, for mind and understanding to be off from God : for it is natural for mind and understanding to move toward God. Mind and understanding are God's peculiar reserve in man ; given to be employed about him : so that it is alienation and sacrilege, to divert them from him. It is not more natural for light things to move upward, and heavy things downward, than for mind and understanding to move toward God. Now great sinners are off from God, and live without God in the world ; and therefore are in a state of violence, in a state unnatural.

2. It

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2. It is unnatural to be *intemperate* : for all acknowledge that nature is content with moderate things. Nature's desires are modest, and within bounds and compass. I dare say, no man is guilty of intemperance, but by a base abuse of himself ; for all excess is burdensome : it is grievous to nature, to exceed either in eating or drinking, either unmeasurably, or unseasonably. These men also leave the *natural use*.

3. It is devilish to be spiteful, or envious, or revengeful : any one that is so, *leaves the natural use* : for man by nature is a sociable creature, and therefore being sociable in his disposition, he doth wish well to all those in whose company he takes pleasure. Now this must be understood of nature before it is abused by unnatural acts, ill use, custom, and practice : but in its degeneracy it is the quite contrary. For *corruptio optimi est pessima*, the better any thing is in its constitution and integrity, the worse it is in its depravation and degeneracy.

By these three I prove, that great sinners are ill at ease in themselves, and have offered violence to their own natures : and it is hereby apparent, that misery is of ourselves ; and that whosoever perisheth, he will have cause to blame himself.

I now hasten to a *conclusion* ; and will shut up the point with some *inferences*. I infer four things.

First, If the creatures misery be within them, and from themselves, then no imputation is to be laid upon God, of hard usage of any of his creatures.

Secondly,

Secondly, If this were well considered, men would not allow themselves to be lawless, arbitrary, licentious, and exorbitant : for this will be their ruin.

Thirdly, If this were also considered, then men would not be aggrieved at the shews and appearances that are in this vain world.

Fourthly, This recommends to us the principles of *reason and religion* ; where all is sincere and solid ; where nothing is imaginary, nothing conceited, nothing fantastical.

First, If the creatures misery be from within, and from themselves, then no imputation lies upon God, of hard usage of any of his creatures. This I dare affirm, that if any thing be to be suspected on God's part, it is one of these three priviledges ; and I will vindicate them all : either, (1.) An act of his absolute sovereignty : or, (2.) His irresistible will : or, (3.) His uncontrollable power. And if I can apologize for these three, then in no state the miserable man can come into, will he be able to ease or relieve himself by charging any thing upon God. If any one think he may, I must tell him, that he runs a desperate hazard, and puts things upon a most vent'rous issue.

1st, No creature's misery proceeds from the *absolute sovereignty of God* ; because there is no danger at all to an inferior from the superior's sovereignty, where the superior's sovereignty is in certain conjunction with righteousness and holiness. For they do absolutely determine to the reason of things, and always have respect to that. Where righteousness and holiness are in conjunction with sovereignty,

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no danger ; nothing formidable in sovereignty, where righteousness and holiness are in conjunction with it ; as they are certainly in God : which scripture affirms a thousand times over of the divine sovereignty, and assures us, that all the ways of God are ways of truth, righteousness, and holiness : therefore no danger. Yea, so far from being in danger, that I dare affirm, that it is our great advantage ; because he that is invested with sovereignty, can every where make supply as occasion requires : nothing at any time is wanting to a perfect determination of any cause ; because nothing is wanting in power or right. If now we have to do with God, because of his absolute sovereignty, he hath power in himself, to do what is needful, and whatsoever he promises, is infallible : for God because of his absolute sovereignty, is not accountable to any else ; and it is a full determination what he doth say or do ; because he hath an inherent and an independent right. So that God's absolute sovereignty is our advantage. For whatsoever God saith and declares, we may be sure of his terms, because he doth not act as one that is under restraint ; but whatsoever he saith is right, and shall certainly take effect. We shall have things certainly and soon brought to a period : and no danger from it, because of its certain conjunction with holiness and righteousness ; and holiness and righteousness have respect to the reason of the thing, and to be dealt withal according to the reason of the thing, nothing in heaven is better. Therefore the destruction of any creature cannot be thought to be, in any wise, an act of sovereignty. Nor, 2dly,

2dly, Is it the effect of God's irresistible will. We know this, because God hath declared it : for though the counsels both of God and men are secret while in their own breasts ; yet no longer so when once declared. Now the scripture doth declare (and that is God's instrument in the world, that doth declare and abundantly shew us) that *God doth neither will, nor take pleasure in the destruction of any of his creatures*, Prov. i. 22, 23. Is. v. 4. Ezek. xviii. 32. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 9. Phil. ii. 13. Therefore nothing formidable in the irresistible will of God ; neither is there the least reason to suspect at all the will of God, tho' granted irresistible ; either from any quality of the divine nature, or from any interest, or any instance we have of God's proceeding and dealing with his creatures. 1. I refer to God's instrument in the world ; which if we be christians, we acknowledge, and by it are to be concluded, as being the voluntary resolutions of the divine will : and that assures us, that *God is love ; and whosoever dwells in love, dwells in God*, 1 John iv. 16. But then, if you lay aside the bible, and go to reason, I say there is no reason, no ground of suspicion, not from the first, if you consider the quality of the divine nature : for it is well resolved concerning God, that all ill-will is banished from the throne of God ; envy and malice are not within the throne of the divine majesty ; no such thing as envy and malice in heaven ; these are originally from hell, and the worst principle of hell ; these are eternally banished from the divine nature : therefore no quality in God gives us cause to suspect. (2.)

Neither

Neither any *interest* on God's part. Who can imagine any *interest* to God in the loss of a creature? No, God's *interest* in his creature is greater in any of us, than we have in ourselves : and methinks those that are parents, they not finding in themselves any desire to the ruin of their children, should not think any such thing in God. What doth God get by hell? It is the glory of God to maintain and propagate holiness, and righteousness, and truth throughout the whole creation : and this is God's doing all for his own glory, and it is the explication of our doing all for the glory of God, to be subservient to this design ; and in this way is life and happiness, *Rom. ii. 5. To them who by a patient continuance in well doing, seek for honour, and glory, and immortality, eternal life.* By confining ourselves in the use of our power and liberty, to good only, we serve God and glorify him. But, (3.) No ground of suspicion from the proofs we have of God in his dealing with his creatures. *Experience of God doth witness*, that God hath no design in the misery of the creature. What is there in God, but a great patience to bear with all the indignities of the profane, and all the falsities of a hypocritical crew? *Solomon* tells us, *that sentence against an evil work, is not speedily executed, Eccl. viii. 11.* And doth he not make his sun to rise and to shine upon the ungodly as well as upon the righteous? *Matt. v. 45.* And is it not expressly declared, that *his tender mercies are over all his works?* *Psal. cxlv. 9.* And the gospel puts it out of doubt; *John iii. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever*

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ver believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. And what could he do more? *And him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins,* Acts v. 31. So that we have great cause to think otherwise of God, than that he is a designer of his creatures misery; for in so thinking, we do God a second injury. The first is, we neglect God; the second is, we charge him with our fault, and with our ruin; and that is worse than the former. Now for the

3d. No suspicion from God's uncontrollable power. It is true, omnipotency might do what it would; but there is no cause to fear or suspect the uncontrollable power of God, to make a creature miserable. My reason is, that agent is without all suspicion of using power to the hurt of a creature, that did voluntarily of his infinite goodness, use his power to call that creature out of nothing into being. For it was a communication of grace and favour, to awaken one out of *non-entity*, and bring him into being, when there was nothing to move either agency or compassion. How can we suspect *that power* to do us harm causelessly; which power, upon its own disposition, did call us into being? He who upon his own good disposition, in the first instance, did employ his power to call out of nothing into being; he is not to be suspected, but that he will regard the desire, the estate, and the necessity of the creature in the second instance, that is, to preserve the creature. No reason therefore to think that the creature shall become wretched or miser-

able, by any act of his, by whose benignity he was called into being. Let us therefore resolve with *Elibu*, *I will ascribe all righteousness to my maker*, Job xxxvi. 3. And let us do so too; and avoid all such thoughts and apprehensions concerning God, as will any wise discommend him to us, or discountenance our applications and approaches to him. Now to this let me add, that this is the first and leading point in all religion, for every one to entertain right suppositions concerning God: for whosoever hath wrong apprehensions of God concerning his creature, he stumbles at the threshold: for all religion depends upon a man's having in his mind right suppositions concerning God. And he that misrepresents God to himself, he will not love him: and he doth discourage and discountenance his own application to him.

Thus I have made it appear, that since man's misery is within himself, and of himself; we are not to attribute to God any hard usage of his creature. I believe, could the damn'd in hell find in God the least failure, they would be less self-condemned, and so in a degree put out hell-fire: for the life of hell is to be self-condemned. And thus may the scrupulous and doubtful mind of man be satisfied, and freed from its fear of God's absolute *sovereignty*, *irresistable will*, or *uncontroulable power*. But absolutely to rid the mind of man from all scruples, I must superadd a

4th, Some may apprehend remediless danger from that which we call God's *justice*. I confess, if I cannot satisfy you in this case, this will be beyond

yond all the former. For if justice require the destruction of a creature, this will put a necessity upon God himself; he can do no otherwise. If the necessity of justice require so, he is not limited to destroy a sinner to maintain his righteousness; and this is beyond the three former: for in case of the other three, he may use his liberty as he pleaseth; to wit, in the use of his dominion, the determination of his mind, and the executions of his omnipotency; in these he may use his power as he pleaseth: but if justice require it, he is necessitated, and can do no otherwise. I say two things to this. (1.) God is upon no account necessitated to punish sin, at least, not to punish it finally, where he meets with after-repentance in the sinner. I say, to the *penitent*, I keep strictly to that: for to forgive sin to the impenitent, I understand it not. (2.) God is the master of his own satisfaction; he may admit of such recompence as he is pleased with, and as he judgeth fit, without being accountable to any else: for the right of punishment is the secondary right in God. The first right is the right of obedience: and if the creature deny obedience, God hath a right to extort it. But now if any one think that God cannot abate, remit, relaxate; then he denies to God common right: for this is a common right; every one that hath right, may dispose of it: any man may do this; and shall we deny this to God? Every one hath power to retain, or part with what is his own right, if he will. I add, that it doth plainly appear, that the necessity of justice doth not so require, as this suspicion doth

alledge, by reason of the great acquiescence that God hath in the great interposure of his son, and the sinner's repentance and faith. Thus I think I have made it appear, that no creature comes to misery, by any act of God's; which was my first inference. But

Secondly, If this were considered, men would not allow themselves to be lawless, and exorbitant, though they might avoid the danger of divine and human laws: for misery ariseth from within, so that sinners will be miserable, and unhappy, though God and man should let them alone; for misery ariseth from within. Men do acts that are monstrous and unnatural, and though God should overlook them, and let them alone; yet these sinners would be miserable and unhappy, if any of these four things would make them so. Guilt of conscience, malignity and naughtiness of mind, a sickly, diseased and rotten body, or God withdrawing in displeasure: if any of these four would make a man miserable, then a sinner would be miserable, if God should let him alone. (1.) *Guilt* of conscience; and this hath driven men to the most cruel and unnatural practices upon themselves: for it hath put them upon despair, and hurried them by their own means, to avoid internal hell, it hath driven them to external hell, by their own hands. We are not sure of the reason of our own minds, for our own preservation; nor can we depend on this, which is our greatest security under God, either when our reason is not satisfied in our religion (which makes a very uneasy condition,) or when our practices are not

not justified by the reason of our minds and religion. (2.) *Malignity* and naughtiness of mind. This *second* hath made mens conditions very tedious, and uneasy to themselves ; as not having power and government of their minds ; so having no true self-enjoyment, that is upon such grounds as will bear examination, if men come to reflect and consider. Also this *malignity* and naughtiness of mind, hath made men very pests and plagues to the places where they live, and disturbers of the quiet of the persons, who are their neighbours, and in converse, with whom they have their habitations. This internal rancour and naughtiness of mind, as it disposeth men of themselves, that they have no true self-enjoyment ; so it makes them very ill neighbours, pests and plagues to all those they live in conjunction withal : for it still puts them upon plotting, and contriving mischief, and makes them greedy of the first opportunity to put it in practice. (3.) A diseased and rotten body : and as to this I have shewed you, that many vices tend to the hurt of the body ; therefore a body thus marred and spoiled, through wickedness and sin, this doth make work for the physician, and puts us upon very uncouth remedies, many of the remedies are to nature intolerable ; and besides this, intemperate use doth take off and prevent the natural pleasure of temperate eating and drinking, and sleeping ; for in nature's way only is health and strength. (4.) God with-drawing in displeasure. And this imports the being cut off from the fountain, taken out of the center, and being driven from the end : for such is God in relation to

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the souls of men. All things desire and move toward their center, and being driven from that, die : the soul of man rent from God, is as leaves rent off from the tree, which wither, and come to nothing. So far as our minds are fixed in God, so far they retain their perfection ; but rend the soul of man from God, it shrivels up, and comes to nothing till it be restored to God, and rest in him as original, and final. For believe it, God is the center of all immortal spirits and substances ; they eat not the flesh of oxen, nor drink the blood of goats. The loss of the sun to the world, is nothing to the loss of God to reasonable and immortal souls. God is the immaterial sun, in the immaterial world of angels and spirits. And so much for the *second* inference. A word to the other two.

Thirdly, If this were well considered, men would not be aggrieved at the shews and appearances of this vain world ; so as to envy the condition of the fond and foolish, who intoxicate themselves with fancies, and are self-flatterers. For be it what it will, either power, or command, or wealth, if it be not in conjunction with uprightness and integrity, it is but a vain shew ; they have neither solidity nor substance, nor are of permanency, or continuance, because they have not truth at the bottom ; their joy is a sorry thing, it may be from the teeth outward ; but not having a solid foundation, it is but a lie. *The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment.* Job xx. 5. This seeming prosperity of the wicked, hath been a stumbling block to good men in former ages, as to

David

David, Psalms lxxiii. to *Job*, chap. xxi. 7. to *Jeremiah*, chap. xii. till they had bethought themselves, and examined and considered : but that's well that ends well. It is no more sincere and solid, than the satisfaction high-way-men and robbers have, in that they seem to get for the present, who tho' they domineer for a while, and carry all before them ; yet forget their pleasure, or remember it with repentance, when 'tis too late ; when they come to be arraigned, condemned, and executed. The tempter abuses these credulous persons, suggesting the day of vengeance to be a long time hence ; whereas the sins of men do not always stay for all their punishment, till the day of judgment. But whether external punishment be sooner or later ; wickedness carries misery in its own bowels. Were we but at times, to see the torture and anguish that guiltiness doth give occasion to ; the uneasiness of naughty and malicious minds ; the perplexities and vexations, of the envious ; a man of poverty, if of innocence and integrity, would not change conditions with them, notwithstanding all their worldly accommodations, and gay out-sides. *Wicked men are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt ; there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* Is. lvii. 20, 21.

Fourthly, This then doth effectually recommend to us the principles of reason and religion ; as things fit to rule and govern in the life of man ; as things sovereign to nature ; as the law of mens apprehensions, and the rule of mens actions. These moderate mens passions, compose mens spirits,
quiet

quiet their minds, keep men in their wits and secure their bodies. A discomposed mind doth disaffect the body, and a distempered body doth disturb the mind. This is upon universal experience found true, that there is more of solid satisfaction in good self government, than in all the forced jollities and pleasures in the world.

Therefore, to obtain this composedness of spirit, and in order to this great work of *self-government* : *first*, I propose, that we do not attempt to compound and make things stand together, that are of a contrary nature and quality ; as *worldly policy* and *divine wisdom*. These *two* things are as distinct as any things in the world ; the *one* is for compassing ends, by all ways and arts ; the *other* is, for all ways of righteousness, peaceableness, and universal goodwill. Thus, for a man to resolve to get an estate, by any ways or means, *to haste to be rich*, Pro. xxviii. 22. and, with this, to retain innocency, uprightness and integrity, (than which, nothing is more impossible :) — for a man to compound inordinate self-love, with the love of God and his neighbour : — for a man to make it the employment of mind and understanding, to gratify sense, and serve brutish lusts ; and yet think that he may be acted, and guided, by the good spirit of God. — These things will not consist together.

Secondly, I propose, that in all the variety, difficulties, and uncertainties of this world, (which is subject to so many and various changes) a man resolve *to be himself*, as to the great things of human life. — Let him be *the same* in respect of his end, both

both intermediate and ultimate ; the next, and the last ; that is, let his immediate end be warrantable and lawful, and the ultimate end be *that* which is universally good ; as *the observance of God, and his own happiness.* For *these* are the same, and concur together.——Let him be *the same*, in respect of his aims, designs and intentions. Let these be always worthy, and let him hold to them.——Let him be *the same*, in respect of his rule and principle of living and of acting. Tho' he fail in a particular action ; yet let him hold to his rule ; and, as soon as he can, recover himself to his rule and law.——Let him be the same in respect of his contentment and satisfaction. Let not a man take up, and applaud himself, in any attainment, or acquisition, that is short of *that* which will finally accomplish a man, and make him happy.——Let a man always *be himself*, in respect of his engagements and undertakings.——Let a man conjoin with his natural powers (as doth become him,) a due acknowledgment of God, in respect of whatsoever ability or sufficiency he hath. Let him duly acknowledge God, and be apprehensive that he derives from him, and therefore ought to submit to him, and depend upon him, and finally refer to him : for a life that is not acted, governed, and over ruled by a *determinate end*, and carried on by a certain *purpose* ; it is both exorbitant, weak, and inconsistent. Such men *live by chance*, and do what is next, and not what they should, and ought : such men live as if their body had swallowed up their soul. These mens lives are very uncertain things.

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They live a kind of lottery, the rules, and methods whereof, no body is acquainted with : but things are, as they fall out. Such men are guided by nothing else but a confused multitude of fancies, jumbled together, as the things of this world were at the first creation of them. And this is true of all those, whose lives and conversations are not made steady, and directed, by a right intended end, and a true purpose of life.

In the *third* place, I propose, that we consider this ; that we are not to depend on *things without us* ; as worldly-spirited men do. If we have as many of these things as are for use, and as the necessities of life require ; we have enough. For what are these things, out of their use ? or, beyond their use ? What are they *then*, but burden and cumber ? Or, at least, the gratification of fancy and imagination ? Now, for a man to affect a multitude of things, and all varieties, it is but to discompose his own mind. For as we multiply objects, we multiply thoughts ; and have more things to manage and order : we multiply our care ; which makes us *less ourselves*, and less free to *self-enjoyment*.—— This is the temper of some men, (*Psal. iv. 6.*) *who will shew us any good ?* It matters not who is the agent : they are wholly undetermined as to choice, and undirected as to the object. This is the voice of a man in confusion ; a man without notion, and principles ; a man that hath not thought, studied, and considered. But the good man is determined. Worldly things soon surfeit and cloy us ; they make a thick and gross ap-

apprehension : their variety doth occasion distraction to the mind ; and their emptiness and penury doth occasion dissatisfaction. In pursuit of worldly things there is *certain* care, and very *uncertain* success. No one that is in pursuit of earthly things, can assure himself of success. And if he be in pursuit, and do not prevail ; disappointments will break him. Nothing is more grievous than *disappointment*.

Fourthly, I propose, that we awaken in ourselves an intellectual sense of *divine* and *spiritual things* ; which, as they are in nearer relation to our souls, so they are more fitting and satisfactory. Nothing is so satisfactory to the mind which is improved, or any way polished, as the letting in of light, and the communication of truth ; this is more pleasant to such a mind, than any pleasure of sense whatsoever. There is great satisfaction in the enjoyment of mental things. By this means, our thoughts will stay at home : but if a man wander from home, he shows his own weakness. Extravagant appetites shew inward poverty. He that knows *better*, hath no greediness after that which is *worse*.

These are the things I propose to you, for the obtaining of this unity of mind, and composedness of spirit. Without this, we shall have very little enjoyment of ourselves. None think they *are themselves*, when they are in confusion of thought, perplexity of mind, doubtful in resolution, and under sad apprehensions. Without this, there will be no ability for the discharge of our duty, in the world. Till a man hath well reformed his own ill-govern'd house ;

364 *The direful vengeance which falls upon*
house ; till he hath cooled and calmed his heated
and disturbed fancy ; till he hath recovered himself
from mind-confounding, and darkening thoughts ;
he will be in no capacity or disposition to act abroad.
Is he fit to act in the world, to direct and govern
others, that hath nothing but darkness and confusi-
on, disorder and distemper in his own breast ? All
his faculties in conspiracy one against another ? Is
this man fit to act *abroad*, that hath not done his
work *within himself* ? — Therefore let every body
take himself to task ; watch over himself ; and think,
that his best discharge of government, is, *of himself*,
and that *there* he ought to begin.

And, that a man may keep himself in temper, and
the better govern his thoughts and apprehensions,
let him have a sense of the majesty of God. *The*
moralist gave this, for a rule ; to set some great and
worthy person before a man, if he would do worth-
ily. Think (saith one) of *Cato*, (a man that was
exact according to the *moralist's* rule.) He thought
that if a man did but think of such a person as *that*
was ; it would keep him from consenting to iniqui-
ty. But how much more, then, the thinking of
the divine majesty ? — We never do any thing so
secretly, but in the presence of two witnesses, *God*,
and *our own conscience*.

Lastly, To add more to your thoughts concern-
ing the necessity of *self-government*. It is but little
to say, *that I am placed in authority* ; or, that I can
command either legions or regions, unless I have
free-dispose of myself. 'Tho' a man could say of
himself, as the centurion did, *Matth. viii. 9. I am*

a man in authority, and I have servants under me ; and to this man I say go, and he goeth ; and to another, come, and he cometh, &c. yet he is not a free man, unless he be master of himself. Unless I can bid myself *do this, and I do it*, without difficulty, interruption, or disturbance ; my command of others is insignificant, unless I am intirely myself, and can keep out all foreign violence and opposition, from a hand without. To have thoughts imposed, things injected, when they are wholly inexpedient, and we ourselves otherwise better employed : to have suggestions thrust upon us, neither to be refused, nor commanded : to have a fire in our breast, which we cannot put out : to be at every beck and call : to have a mind disquieted, and discomposed ; and meditation confounded, or interrupted : to have thoughts running madly, or snatched away from us : if *this* be our case ; then, I add, that for any seeming glory from without, or any vain applause to compensate this home-bred mischief, a man may as well be eased of the pain of the gout or stone, by being laid in a bed of down, or of the fit of a burning fever, by the cool air fanning him, as he may be relieved, in this internal discomposure of mind, by worldly application. The true remedy ariseth *from within*. Admit principles of reason : sow in thy mind, seeds of virtue : be not through thine own indisposition, *tinder* to every temptation ; as he that is not settled in the habit of virtue. For, happiness is not from *without*. To the chearful spirit, must be a richer contribution, than a joint concurrence of worldly things ; *internal*

nal peace, ease, and satisfaction of mind ; rational apprehensions, calm and quiet thoughts ; a serene heaven within ; which are the true ingredients of self-enjoyment. There is no man free, unless he be wise ; and there is no man wise, who hath not the government of himself. For this man is a slave. Solomon hath told us, that he who ruleth his spirit, is greater than he that taketh a city, Prov. xvi. 32. And he that doth not this, doth not enjoy himself. Wherefore let us have clear perceptions of the reason of things ; and power, within ourselves, without distraction, to do, and resolve accordingly : and then I account a man a good man, a wise man, and well accomplish'd. And he that arrives not to this, lives at peradventure, and acts like a fool : he doth nothing worthy his own species ; or the rank and order of a rational and intelligent being. For we are bound, by virtue of our creation, to act out of a fore-sight of the reason of things ; as inferior beings act according to their connatural qualities : and it is monstrous and horrid if they do not. In like manner, it is ugly, and degenerate, for man, that is endued with reason to act at hap-hazard, and not out of fore-sight of the reason of things. This is as monstrous, as it is, for the sun not to shine, and to fill the air with stench and putrefaction.

The irreligious therefore leave *natural use*, verse 27. which, till nature be put out of course ; and, by custom, habituated to the contrary ; cannot but be grievous. Things easily go on, in nature's way ; but being interrupted, for a while at least, *strive* to return to their natural course. Nothing doth well
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under force and violence ; and they that force things, often break themselves, but things return to their course. This hath been found true in cases of several sorts : *res nolunt male administrari*. When the impediment is removed, things return to their natural course. If there be no rancour, no naughtiness in our minds; to obey God's commandments will be connatural to us, not grievous.

The world hath an ill opinion of religion : but, if we will believe our Saviour, *his yoke is easy, and his burden is light*, Matt. xi. 30. *His commandments are not grievous*, 1 John v. 3. David found high content in them. *Pf. cxix*. And Solomon, it is the sum of all his experience, he found all else to be vanity, but the true motions of religion. It sometimes comes to pass, through the grace and goodness of God, that *some* particular persons, after a wild course run (if incorrigibleness, and invincible hardness, be not contracted, by unnatural practice,) upon self-reflection, and after consideration, come greatly to befool themselves, and challenge, and condemn themselves in what they have done ; and return with firm resolution, and great courage to ways of sobriety, and religion ; and hold better to it, because of former costly experience. Such an instance is a great *condemnation* to licentious and exorbitant practices; and is a *testimony* from persons of double experience, of the *better* ways of *virtue*. And this we have had experience of, that none prove better men than these ; and they make recompence by their good example, and justify the truth which they did transgress arbitrarily and licentiously before.

DISCOURSE LXVII.

Whatsoever things are true.

PHIL. iv. 8.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are seemly, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

A Weightier scripture, more summary and comprehensive of all perfection, more matter of greater weight I do not find contracted any where. This text shews how complete and well-furnished the man of God should be; one who professes himself a christian, and names Christ and pretends to the faith of the gospel; whatsoever is good in its nature and quality, should be well known to him, should be his ornament and accomplishment, should be that which may endow his mind and qualify his spirit; for see how deeply the man of God, or a christian is here charged. There are no fewer than eight heads: of which I shall give you a full account.

I. Whatsoever is *right, sincere and true.*

II. Whatsoever is *comely, grave and venerable.*

III. Whatsoever is *fair, just and equal.*

IV.

IV. Whatsoever is *sacred, pure and holy.*

V. Whatsoever is *generous, noble and lovely.*

VI. Whatsoever is of *credit, value or esteem*, among persons competent to judge, *viz.* persons of well informed understandings, and well refined morals ; for other persons are no more competent to judge what is of value or worth, than a blind man, of colours, or a deaf man, of sounds.

VII. Whatsoever is of *singular use, or particular virtue.*

VIII. Whatsoever *may recommend a man's person, or gain him advantage.*

Whatsoever is such as this upon any of these accounts, it is to be the exercise and employment of every man that calls himself a christian ; and by these he is to make himself known to the world : in all these cases he ought to think it worthy of himself and becoming him, to discharge himself fully. *Think on these things* ; that is, in the use of your reason, mind and understanding ; in the exercise of your rational faculties, charge yourselves with these things : It is not barely, have these things in your thoughts ; but, in the use of your reason recommend all these things to yourself ; think that you do not acquit yourself, that you do not do that which becomes you, that you do not raise a connatural superstructure to the foundation of nature, that you do not do that which is suitable to a christian, that you have your reason to little purpose ; if you do not in the reason of your mind think all these things worthy of you. This is the sum of the words ; *finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true,*

V O L. III.

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whatsoever things are honest, &c. And this for the general; I now come to particulars.

I. *Whatsoever things are true.* And here we must take up *Pilate's* question, *what is truth?* *John xviii. 38.* I will chuse to give you an account only in things practical; but yet you must give me leave a little; and the better to give you an account of this particular, I shall digest what I have to say into this following method.

First, Declare the difference of truth; for truth is first in things, then in our apprehensions.

Secondly, The truth of things is considerable either in *foro naturæ*, or *genere morum*; that is, upon a natural account, or as it is the concernment of an intelligent and voluntary agent.

Thirdly, I shall shew whence ariseth our obligation to truth.

Fourthly, By what rules we shall find out truth.

Fifthly, The evidences and assurances we have of truth.

Sixthly, Clear all, by shewing all this in particular instances.

Seventhly, and lastly, make certain inferences.

For the *first*; *the truth of things* lies in this; that things do exist of their own principles; as a man is a true man, because he doth consist of such a body and an immortal soul. Things are true, as they do exist of their principles, and as they are answerable to the idea of them in the divine mind pre-existent to them: for this is the manner of working of an intelligent agent, to do things according to a pre-conceived apprehension of his mind. Now this truth

truth of things is no charge of ours; it is God's charge; it is the effect of God's creation; for he hath made all things true, and therefore things must be true: for God cannot fail either through impotency, or want of power, or through error of judgment: and if any thing be monstrous, it ariseth either from some gross matter, or from impediment; if there be any redundant or defective matter, or if the effect be hindered, then the thing must be monstrous, but otherwise we are to take it for granted that things are true, because they are God's workmanship. This is truth, *metaphysically* but then that which we are concerned in, is *the truth of our apprehensions*; and our apprehensions are *then* true, *when* they agree with the truth and existence of things; when we conceive of things as they are; and if we think otherwise, then there is a lie in our understandings. And here is the occasion of all the evil that breaks in upon mortals, that we do not conceive of things as they are, but that all men (except some few) either worship the idol of some *particular imagination*, or the idol of *popular superstition*; they either follow private imagination of their own, or general mistakes; and he is a man of a thousand, that can rise up and quit himself of these two idols. By false imagination a man deprives himself of good; for it is a true rule, that imagination makes the case within, tho' not without; for as a man conceives, so is the case within; and *Solomon* observes, that the simple or the fool believes every thing that is represented: but the state of things is determined; this is fixed by God in the moment of creation, and our

judgment and apprehension are to be conformable to the reality and existence of things ; and when our affections and actions are suitable to such a judgment and sense of our minds, we are then in the truth, and never else : the first belongs to a man's understanding, and that speaks him an able man, a man of judgment, a man of sense and experience ; and the latter speaks him a good man ; and indeed if mens actions comply not with the sense of their judgments, there will be self-condemnation and no peace at all within ; and this is a great and mighty distinction ; *the truth of things*. And there it is first ; and that is *God's* charge : God made things to exist as they do ; God made all things true ; God made all our faculties true, and we may be assured our faculties are true, because God gave them us ; and we may believe our faculties, because they came out of the hands of God : our faculties are the tools that God gave us to work by, and by them we receive whatsoever God offers to our consideration : if our faculties are not true, we are not chargeable for not understanding God, or not receiving from him. And this is the first, *truth in things* ; but then the second is *our* charge ; *truth in our apprehensions* ; and the truth in our apprehensions lies in their conformity to the truth of things. If we think otherwise than the truth of things, we live in a lie.

Secondly, The second distinction is the truth of things, either upon a *natural* consideration, to know things in their natures and qualities ; and this is natural philosophy ; and this is of great use in the
life

life of man, and tends to the enlarging man's understanding ; but this is not the concernment of religion and conscience. Or else it is, *in genere morum*, truth upon *moral consideration* ; and this only is the concernment of conscience ; and here we do enquire whether things be right or wrong, good or evil, and accordingly charge ourselves (if we be persons of conscience ;) and we are to be in reconciliation with things that are good, and to have a displacency against things that are impure, unholy and contrary to the mind and will of God ; and this is the concernment of conscience and the business of religion, and is every bodies charge ; for both a good state here, and a future good state hereafter depends upon it.

Thirdly, How then come we to be under the obligation to truth ? Now man's obligation to truth (that is, that truth should be in all his actions and apprehensions) is grounded upon the state and principles of his creation ; which I explicate in four particulars. 1. *Man's capacity.* 2. *Man's proper employment.* 3. *Man's true end.* 4. *Man's relation.* 1st. *Man's capacity* ; and thereby he is under an obligation of duty to God, because God hath made him capable to know that he is, and to know that he himself arises from other causes greater and more good than himself : for the spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord ; and no man hath mind and understanding, but he may as naturally know, that there is a God upon whom he depends, as he may know there is a sun in the firmament, if he will open his eyes. By the power of his understanding

he is made apprehensive of God ; and then by that prerogative and privilege of liberty and freedom, he is able to sacrifice to God, and to bring God the free consent of his mind ; to offer up himself to God, an offering of a sweet-smelling savour. And he may know, according to the rule of righteousness, what he ought to do, and what to forbear ; that he ought to do, righteously, and live soberly, and to live in regard and observance of God, and to avoid the contrary : and this is grounded upon man's *capacity*. 2dly. *Man's proper employment*. The natural employment and proper business of mind and understanding, is to attend upon God ; to be employed about him, to observe him, to receive from him, to comply with him and obey him, &c. And if men do not do thus, neither have God in their thoughts, but employ mind and understanding to drudge to worldly ends and purposes, at the day of judgment it will appear to be sacrilege. 3dly. *Man's true end*. God is a man's ultimate end, and the center in whom he doth rest. God is as properly the end of souls, as any thing is the end of another ; it is as proper for a man's soul to make towards God, as it is for any thing in the world to make to its center, as it is for heavy things to fall downwards, or light things to fly upwards. That God that is original to me, I ought to make him final to me ; and if I receive all from God, I ought to refer to him, and rest in him. 4thly. *Man's relation*. And that is treble : to God, to his fellow-creatures, and to himself. Now see what things are founded in a man's relation. 1st. His relation to God, doth im-

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import all dependence upon God, all observance of God, all submission to God, all high apprehensions of God, faith and affiance in him; that he adore and reverence him, love and honour him, rejoice and delight in him, make acknowledgment to him, and give him thanks for his free communication and influence, by and thro' which we live and enjoy all things. *2dly.* His relation to his *fellow-creatures.* And that lays a foundation of equity and righteousness, and requires a man to do as he would be done by, and to live in love and good-will, wishing well to others, taking delight to do courtesies, to injure none, to offend none, but to have his mind discharged from all spite, fury, malignity, mischief, &c. Then, *3dly,* In the relation he standeth in to *himself*, as he doth consist of an immortal soul, and a corruptible body: this engageth him to use a proportionable care of his soul in competition with his body, according to the excellency of his soul above his body: the truth of things requires that the soul have the predominance over the body, and that the body be subordinate to it; for in all reason the worse must be subordinate to the better.

Upon all these considerations man is obliged to abide in the truth, and to perform all acts of sobriety as to *himself*, all acts of righteousness as in conjunction with *others*; all acts of duty and piety to *God*, as his sovereign, and as his maker. And thus have I shewed you the ground of man's being under the *obligation* to truth.

The *fourth* particular is to give you an account of the *rule* and *measure* of truth; and this is a notion

on worth every man's carrying away. I will give you but two *measures* or *rules* whereby you may find out or judge of truths. 1. According to the nature of God ; or (which is the same) according to the reason of things. 2. According to the mind and will of God, or (which concurs with this) according to the resolution of him that hath right ; and there is a double right, the right of power and authority, and the right of property. And truth is to be determined by one of these measures.

The 1st is the *measure*, where the matter is unchangeable and unalterable, where it is so and it cannot be otherwise, and it doth not depend upon the will and pleasure of any agent whatsoever, but the things are necessary in themselves, and they are certainly and constantly so ; as all ways of goodness, righteousness, mercy, clemency, benignity, compassion, &c. that which is fit, that which is comely, that which is right, just, honest, pure ; these are not to be controuled by any power whatsoever, for these are *sua jure*.

2. But when there are things that are of an indifferent nature ; and then the measure is according to the pleasure of God ; good, while God appoints them, as the *Mosaical* institution ; but after God deserted it, it was the contrary : or else, according to the determination of him that hath right to state, constitute, determine and appoint ; and two sorts of persons have this ; there is either the right of authority, and so the magistrate may make laws and require obedience, and he ought to have it ; for every man, where he hath power, he may make use of

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of it, and he doth not offend if he doth not exceed his bounds ; so the magistrate resolves in things that are matters of order ; and he that will live in any country, he must observe the rules and laws of that country. Or else, there is the right of property as an owner ; every owner hath a right of property to dispose of his own, and no man can invade upon that which is another man's property, unless he be permitted upon terms of bargain or treaty ; and so the property of things goes from one to another. These are the rules and measures of truth.

Fifthly, I am to shew you the *evidences* and *assurances* that we have of truth. And they are one of these two ; either we know things by the *light of God's creation*, or *some after-revelation from God*. By the *light of God's creation*, I am assured there is a God, and that he is righteous and holy, and just and good ; I have as great assurance of this, as I have assurance there is a creature by a creator's make ; by the use of my reason, I as certainly know the divine being and perfections, as I know any thing in the world : then there is the *light of after-revelation* for such doctrines as these ; who Christ was ; what he came into the world for ; how he was used in the world, &c. Now the light of these is the light of after-revelation from God : so we are assured of truth by the *light of God's creation*, that is the principles of reason and natural understanding, together with *divine assistance and after-revelation*. But,

Sixthly, Because generals may prove ineffectual in that they do not so easily enter into particular mens minds and understandings ; therefore I will give you certain *instances*. Therefore, First,

First, I will shew you when there is truth on our part respectively to God. And here, if I discover when we are said to lie to God, I shall by the same shew you when there is truth towards God. Now we put a lie upon God in these five ways. *1st.* To *profess* and *not to believe*. This is high dissimulation and a horrible indignity put upon God: to profess and not to be persuaded in a man's mind, this represents God, as if he might be mistaken or imposed upon. *2dly.* To *believe* and *not to do*. And this is to *hold the truth in unrighteousness*; Rom. 1. 18. which in scripture is looked upon to be an act of the greatest violence, deformity and malignity. *3dly.* To *begin* and *not to persevere*. He is remarkably unfit for the kingdom of God, who having put his hand to the plow, looks back. We disparage God extremely when we leave him. *4thly.* To *pretend* God, and to *mean a man's self* for the world. To make God a *mean*; and the world an *end*. I dread to have to do with any man that will make use of his religion, to gain him credit, and to make a bargain. Of such a man, one had need to take double security. These things are certain, and if a man do examine his conscience, he may find out whether he be treacherous or false, or sincere and true. *5thly.* To *name the name of God*, and *not to depart from evil*. In these five cases we do not abide in the truth, but we put a lie upon God, which is a great provocation of him.

In the second place; as there is a lie to God, so a man may put a lie upon *himself*, and that five ways too. *1st.* To *gratify one's lusts*; be the colour and pretence

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pretence what it will. For lust is a false principle; lusts are exorbitances and irregularities, they are false births, they have no true existence: therefore for a man to gratify his lusts, is to put a lie upon himself. 2d. *To give way to fond imaginations*: this is to lie to one's self: for not the bubblings of particular fancy, but the resolutions and determinations of universal, sober and impartial reason, are realities; these only are rules and principles. 3dly, It is also to put a lie upon a man's self, to *live after a mere temper*. For this is below reason, and short of virtue; and hence it is that every petty astrologer pretends to tell fools their fortune. There is no man that is wise, but he is more than temper. A man by wisdom doth govern himself, and overrule all fate and destiny whatsoever. For man, under God, hath a kind of sovereignty over himself; a man hath power to use diligence, that he may attain to right apprehensions of things; and then he hath power to execute and perform, according to his apprehensions. 4thly, This also is for a man to put a lie upon himself, to *persuade himself in any thing without warrant of reason or scripture*. This is Solomon's fool, that believes every thing that is said, *Prov. xiv. 15*. To settle in an opinion without warrant of reason or scripture, or credible testimony is a foolish thing, is impotency and fondness. Credulity is a stranger to wisdom, and the very nurse of superstition. Also 5thly, A man puts a lie upon himself, if *he have his will for a rule*. For will is no rule at all. Will signifies nothing, unless it be that will that is in conjunction with infallible

libe understanding, which is the will of God. Some will, because they will ; which is not fit : for will is no rule, if there be reason in the case ; will is nothing, but right and reason is to over-rule will. Some men think it the highest perfection to be *arbitrary* ; but really, if they do consider, it is a piece of the greatest impotency, and foulest deformity. In these *five* cases a man puts a lie upon himself.

In the third place, I must give you an account of truth *between man and man*. In which particular, if you will abide in the truth, then you must observe these rules. *1st*, All our *expressions* must answer to our *intentions* : when we treat one with another, we are not in the truth, unless we speak what we mean. *2dly*, It is necessary to truth of a treaty, that the *materials* which make the case, be *fully declared*. For it is no agreement if any part of the matter be unknown. For a case is made up of all circumstances ; do but diversify one circumstance, and it is another thing. Therefore it is necessary that the *materials* be fully declared. *3dly*, The parties that treat together, are to take care that they *understand and mean the same things* ; and not make it a practice for one that is more comprehensive than another, to make use of his wit to over-reach, and if they find they did not mean the same things, they are to release one another ; for no man is obliged further than he did mean. *4thly*, What is meant in the treaty, is ever after to be *stood to* : no after-shifts ; men must not after use wit, or practise upon the doubtfulness or uncertainty of words
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and phrases; thereby to make an escape ; but what was meant in the treaty, must be stood to. 5thly, *Engagements entered into, are to be performed.* What we have engaged, we must perform, unless we can obtain a release from the party with whom we engage ; though it prove inconvenient and worse to us than we imagined. This is truth between man and man ; and whosoever faileth in these, forfeiteth his truth. And thus I have shewed you wherein a man may put a lie upon *God*, upon *himself*, upon his *neighbour*. I shall superadd in

The fourth place ; if any man resolve to be a good man, he must observe these *seven* particulars. 1st. I will begin with the lowest ; but truly it is worthy human nature to take notice of it. That there be from us mercy and fair usage to the beasts that serve us : and undoubtedly he is horribly apostate from God, and degenerate from his own species, that can abuse the beast that serves him. *Solomon* observes, *Prov. x. 12.* that whosoever can abuse a beast that readily serves him, he doth shew himself to be sunk and degenerate below the principle of human reason. A man may without breach of charity say, he is neglective of God, takes no notice of God, and is degenerated from his species, who can abuse the beast that readily serves him. Here is no provocation; no wrong ; and his property and title obliges him to preserve it : we ought not to abuse the creation below us, but to use every thing according to its nature. 2. Ingenuous education and instruction of all rationals. It is not fit that any one should be born into a christian common-

common-wealth, nay, not into the world, but that he have ingenuous education and instruction. This *Solomon* likewise observes, *Pro. xxii. 6. Train up a child in the way that he should go, &c.* It is as much due to human nature, to every man that is born, to have education, information and instruction, to the polishing and improving his rational faculties ; as it is due to give him meat for his belly, and cloaths for his back ; and it is as monstrous and unnatural to bring up a child without mental instruction, as to turn him out of doors to starve in the streets. 3. There ought to be no usurpation, cruelty or oppression any where. Where any man happens to have the advantage (for here we are in several forms and orders,) they that have the advantage over others, ought not to shew their power or privilege by oppression, usurpation or cruelty ; for it cannot be that human nature should be dispossessed of the inherent right that belongs to human nature. 4. There ought to be no inordinacy of spirit, but to think of ourselves according as we ought. 5. No excess in bodily conveniencies. It is a horrible thing for a man when he pretends to eat and drink to continue his life, to exceed so, that instead of preserving his health, he lays up matter of sickness and disease. 6. No displeasure to lodge in any man's breast. And the truth is, a man is certainly injurious to the person of whom he thinks amiss ; and he doth himself harm ; for he carries that in him, which corrodes and disturbs his mind ; and the serenity of a man's mind is his choice and best enjoyment. 7. Use the same measure to others,

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thers, that we ourselves expect. For undoubtedly every man is as much to himself as we are to ourselves; and this is the glorious rule of christianity, and hath represented christianity a lovely and amiable institution in the very sight of the heathen.

Thus have I in several instances declared to you what I mean by abiding in the truth; and by this you may understand this charge of the apostle; *whatsoever things are true.* Judge that it becomes you in all transactions of life, to acknowledge, and to abide in, and to be found in them.

Seventhly, Now I come to make some inferences.

First, I shall improve this as a rule of life. If a man would make himself worthy and valuable, then he is to charge himself that his apprehension of things be according to the reality of things, and then that his election and choice and affections be guided by such apprehension, and that he should worship none of those two great idols, neither err in the way of his own particular fancy, nor be led along by any common error, but let truth guide, govern and over-rule him, in the whole course of his life.

Secondly, Upon this account of truth three things are wholly to be discharged. 1. All falshood and lying. 2. All dissimulation and hypocrisy. 3. All deceit in every kind. We should strictly adhere to right and truth: we ought to be open-hearted, and deal with all simplicity. It is not enough to avoid gross lying, but a man must take care that all his expressions answer the intentions of his mind. Communication one with another, is a turning the
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inside outward, opening your breasts one to another, and if a man pretend to do this and do it not, is he not a cheat ? is not this to lie ? We should intend what we say, and do what we intend.

Thirdly, Here we have a discovery of the false measures of truth, which do obtain in the world where truth doth not take place ; and they are the *longest sword*, the *loudest lungs*, and the *most voices*. 1st. The *longest sword* ; and then the *Mahometans* must have it ; and before them the great disturbers of mankind, whom we call conquerors, as *Alexander* and *Cæsar*. 2^{dly}. If the *loudest lungs* must carry it, then the *Baal-worshippers* must have it from *Elijah* ; for he had but one still voice : but they cry from morning to night. 3^{dly}. If the *most voices* ; then the condemners of our Saviour must have it : for they all cry, crucify, crucify : therefore these are false measures.

In the next place, take notice of the horrid and desperate principles of the church of *Rome*. For they tell us, that faith is not to be kept with hereticks ; and the heretick is he whom they determine to be so : for they have the infallibility ; and so the power of faith and truth is in their hands : and why then may not *Mahometans* say, no faith to be kept with christians ? and why may not christians and *Mahometans* say, no faith to be kept with pagans ? and so faith and truth shall be banished the world. So you see what work will be made ; and there is as good reason for the one as for the other. And,

Lastly,

Lastly, By my opinion, no contempt shall be cast upon honest poverty. Where the accurate observation of right and truth keeps men low in their estates ; when they will not prevaricate and transgress in point of conscience ; there the person is more admirable and commendable because of his honesty, than his condition can be despicable or contemptible because of his poverty : such a man is better than he that is rich in an unconscionable way.

And this may serve for an account of this *first* perfection ; *whatsoever things are true.*

DISCOURSE LXVIII.

Whatsoever things are true.

PHIL. iv. 8.

Whatsoever things are true.

I Have endeavoured to give you a just account of this perfection, *truth* : and upon further thoughts of it, have resolved and must do more, because this is the primary perfection, and original and antecedent to all the other : for all that follow after, have not only foundation but settlement in this ; for once out of the way of truth, and there is an universal shameful miscarriage : fail in truth, and perform in nothing.

I have begun in the following method ; and am now to finish the argument in few words.

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first place, I have declared the *difference* of truth in things themselves where it is primarily, and then truth in our apprehensions. Next, we have enquired, how we that are *rational* and intelligent beings, are under an *obligation* to truth. We have also enquired into the *assurances* of truth, and into the *rules* and *measures* of truth : and then to bring generals down to practice, we have instanced in particular cases, when we are *in the truth* in things between God and us ; and have shewed you when we do manifestly and apparently put a lie upon *God*, upon *ourselves*, or upon *others* : and lastly, have shewed you by what *rules* we are to walk in all the various transactions of life, if we will abide in the truth ; and after this, have made several *inferences* and deductions.

Upon the whole matter, now, let us take up a lamentation ; for if what I have said be true, how miserable and deformed is the world ? That which is the principal thing, wit, reason and understanding, is made ill use of, to serve particular interests, ends and purposes. I instance. How much counterfeit ware, every where to be found ! how much over-reaching in bargains and treaties ! so that now a man had need to be universally skilled, to have right in the world. For generally things are done for the seller's gain, and not for the buyer's service ; whereas every profession doth imply a trust for the service of the publick ; and every man in the way of his profession ought to do things *truly*. For a man to be false in his own trade, is a double iniquity ; for the artiff's skill ought to be the buyer's security :

curacy : every man ought to be ready to render a reason to any man, as in christianity, so every where else ; and he that is ignorant, may demand the help of another man's skill ; and if he make use of his skill to his prejudice, he deals falsely. It is not competent to any person to be universally knowing, wherefore there are several trades and several professions, for the good of mankind ; because no man is more than particularly skilled : we mightily depend upon one another's skill and fidelity. This departure from simplicity and sincerity in profession, is a thing unaccountable : to be witty, crafty, and cunning to deceive, is an ill character. But this is nothing in comparison of the cheats and frauds and couzenage in religion ; because the mischief is not comparable ; for if a man be cheated once here, he need not trust that man again : but what think ye of divinity methodized to sink the people down, and gain pomp to the clergy ? religion accomodated to ends and purposes ? Oh, the infinite gain that comes from one doctrine ! *the pope's power to pardon sin ! the priest's power to absolve sinners*, though it be not real repentance ! if it be but an attrition, such as *Judas's* was, a priest could have made it sovereign to his salvation. Now these cheats, these couzenages are of greater importance, because the consequences are greater. This is not according to the simplicity of the gospel.

But now, that I may the more encourage you in your endeavours after *truth*. I will shew you how many are the advantages that attend mens abiding therein. 1. Truth hath always *God to maintain it* ;

so that none need fear he shall perish in the way. If a man be in the truth, he need do no more than his part ; for God is primarily concerned to defend truth. 2. Truth hath *defence in it self* ; for *great is truth, and it will prevail* ; truth may be over-born for a while, but it will recover. 3. Truth hath *goodness to accompany it* ; therefore none need fear shame or cause to repent. 4. Truth hath *liberty consequent upon it* ; *the truth shall make you free*. John viii. 32. He that is in the truth, is not thoughtful ; but a liar had need carry about with him a good memory : he that confines himself to speak truth, if his memory fails him, he never varies from himself nor from the truth ; but a liar if his memory fails him, betrays himself. 5. Truth is *connatural to our principles* ; for a man forceth himself, when he departs from the truth : we force ourselves when we tell a lie. 6. Truth is the *foundation of order* : all things will be in a hurly-burly and confusion, if not ordered and united and governed by truth ; for falshood puts every thing out of its place. 7. Truth is *the ground of human converse* ; no man is sure of another, neither knows where to have him, if he abides not in the truth. 8. Truth is the *bond of union*. Where men agree in the truth, they meet friendly, and harmonize one with another ; and great sympathy is between them : but out of the ways of truth, men run counter, and cross and contradict one another every where. Where there is perfect truth, there is motion without contradiction. And further, God's government in the world is brought to nothing ; the rules and measures there-

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of are destroyed, if men depart from truth and righteousness in the ways of truth and righteousness there is settlement and security. This we are to know, that God's superintendence over human affairs aims at this; this is the effect of it; that truth and righteousness may obtain an universal empire in the world: and this is an explication of that great phrase, *God's doing all for his own glory*; for it is else an unexplicable form of words, to say, that *God doth all for himself particularly*, as if God were a particular agent and sought his own particular interest: but, the sense is, that which God superintends the world for, is, that truth, righteousness and goodness should take place every where in the world, and, for the advancement of this, every man in the sphere of his activity, and within his compass ought to endeavour; and this is for us *to act to the glory of God*.

Now to draw to a conclusion of this point; I will shew you what a representation scripture makes of the sin of hypocrisy, dissimulation and falshood, in respect of its own quality, of its guilt, of its odiousness to God, and its punishment, 1 *Tim.* iv. 2. *Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared as with an hot iron.* And how invective is our Saviour upon this account against the *Scribes and Pharisees*, *Mat.* xv. 7, 8. *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophecy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* *Mat.* xxiii. 13. *But wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, &c.* *Mat.* xxiv. 51. take notice of the place where God

comes to examine men concerning the discharge of their trust ; and finding some insolent, to express his displeasure, he saith, he will appoint them their portions with hypocrites. *Isa. x. 6. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the streets. Isa. xxxiii. 14. The sinners in Sion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized the hypocrite, and no wonder ; for a hypocrite is one that is nothing but out-side, he is nothing inwardly : though outwardly he may pretend great zeal for God, yet he is nothing inwardly ; things are not right within ; there is nothing there, but naughtiness and falshood ; therefore evil days shall fall upon the hypocrites. Rev. xxii. 15. there is a description of new Jerusalem, which whether it be a representation of the church in the days of the Messias, or of heaven and future happiness, I will not now determine ; it may be both ; but those that will be finally banished and excluded the new Jerusalem, are excluded by this character ; without are dogs and forcerers and whoremongers, and murderers and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. So that notwithstanding we have slight apprehensions of this failing and miscarriage ; I dare say there is nothing in the whole book of God more stigmatized or branded than this. Job xv. 34. The congregation of the hypocrite shall be desolate. Job xx. 5. The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment. They easily go back again, and come to nothing ; they discover themselves as they are,*

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are, who have not truth within. His joy is but for a moment, his mirth is from his teeth outward, his guilty conscience may accuse him, even when he seems to be jolly. *Job xxvii. 8. What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?* Suppose by his hypocrisy and deceit, he hath made some temporary gain, yet what is it when God shall take away his soul? So that whatsoever we consider, whether the state of the hypocrite, or God's judgment of him, or the account he is to give of himself, or the future punishment he shall meet with hereafter; whithersoever we turn ourselves, the hypocrite is in a most miserable case and condition. Sincerity and true intention God doth every where require; he will never dispense for a failure in this particular. If men be not honest-hearted, there is no apology; they are execrable to man, and abominable to God.

In the next place I will observe how the scripture blesteth men in ways of truth; and curseth all ways of falsehood, lying and deceit. *Psal. xxxii. 2. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. Ps. xv. 2. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness and speaketh the truth in his heart. Ps. xxxiv. 13. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Ps. lv. 11. Wickedness is in the midst thereof, deceit and guile depart not from her streets. Ps. cxix. 104. Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Psal. cxx. 3. it is said of Doeg; what shall be given unto thee,*

thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue.
 Prov. xi. i. see what he saith of false measures and false weights, a false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight. Prov. xx. 23. Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord, and a false balance is not good. Prov. xvii. 4. A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips, and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue. Prov. xix. 22. A poor man is better than a liar; the poor man who is despised, neglected and thought to be no body, is better than he that is false, though he have all worldly advantages. Jer. xiv. 14, 15. Then the Lord said unto me; the prophets prophecy lies in my name. I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them; they prophecy to you a false vision, and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart: therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophecy in my name, I sent them not, yet they say, sword and famine shall not be in this land; by sword and famine shall these prophets be consumed. Jer. xxiii. 32. Behold I am against them that prophecy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord. Isa. lix. 14, 15. In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, they speak oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood: and judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter. I cannot open the bible, but I have a text for this purpose:

now

now men overlook this, and think they are men of wit and cunning and brain, that can do this ; and applaud themselves for wise men. But they are highly abominable to God, and obnoxious to him. *Psal. li. 6. Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts. Jer. v. 1. Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know and seek in the broad places thereof, if you can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it. ver. 3. Oh Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth ? Dan. viii. 12. It is the greatest apostacy that is declared, that he shall cast down truth to the ground. Zach. v. 3, 4. Then said he unto me, this is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth ; for every one that stealeth shall be cut off, as on this side according to it ; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it, I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name ; and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and it shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof. Zach. viii. 16. These are the things that ye shall do ; speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour ; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates. This is God's great charge upon men ; and it is mens great degeneracy and apostacy, if they depart from the truth. Some other scriptures out of the new testament : *John i. 47. there our Saviour recommending Nathaniel, gives him this character, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. In John viii. 44. there is the character of the devil ; he is there said**

to

to be a liar from the beginning, and head and original to all those that speak false. *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him: when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it:* and our Saviour was manifested to destroy this lie, to destroy the works of the devil; therefore he is called the truth: *1 Cor. v. 8. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Eph. iv. 15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. 1 Tim. i. 8. See what a conjunction liars are put into; the disobedient, ungodly, sinners, unholy and profane, murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers, manslayers, whoremongers, defilers of themselves with mankind, men-stealers, liars, perjured persons, &c. these are his companions. 1 Pet. ii. 1. Wherefore laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speaking; as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. Jam. iii. 14. Lie not against the truth. Rev. xiv. 5. there is the character of those that follow the lamb, in their mouth was found no guile. And but one place more; Rev. xii. 8. But the fearful, and unbelieving and the abominable, and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.*

This

This is a point of such an universal influence, of so great consideration to the benefit of mankind, so fundamental to human converse ; and the contrary so grievous to God ; that I thought it would not be burdensome to you to make a full representation of this failure and miscarriage, out of scripture. By all this you may understand what an evil character is upon lying and falshood, how abominable 'tis in the sight of God, how mischievous in the subject, how contrary to what God hath declared of himself. Let us now take from scripture the report of God ; all the ways of God, are ways of truth, righteousness and judgment. Is there not great reason then, that the ways of men should be ways of truth, judgment and righteousness ? The communicable perfections of God, ought to be our participation ; if we be in the truth under the communication of God, we shall receive them, taste them and express them in some measure and degree, as in the choosing of good, and refusing of evil, in all acts of mercy, goodness and benignity, &c. But the degenerate state, is a contradicting the natural impress of God that we were admitted to in the moment of our creation ; of which degenerate state you have an account in *Rom. i. 18, 25. holding the truth in unrighteousness, and changing the truth of God into a lie.* And there are not two expressions in the whole book of God, that represent a more abominable state, than these two ; for a man *to hold truth and to disobey it and contradict it in his life, and to change the truth of God into a lie.*

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But

But I will conclude all with these three things by way of argument.

1. *The mischief of the contrary* : Take off the obligation to truth, and all things presently run into disorder and confusion ; I will give you a just representation what an *aceldama*, what a hell the world would be, if the obligation to truth were taken off. Universal reason, which is the rule of action, the life of the world, the true principle that God hath set up as a governour in the world, by which all men shall be judged, with which all men should comply, this will be thereby dethroned and discharged : and what starts up in the room ? mens lusts, which are infinite and irregular ; mens passions, which are tempestuous and boisterous ; mens humours, which are out of the way of reason ; mens wills, which are lawless and exorbitant ; these would fill all places ; so that all men would be at a loss : no man knows what to *do*, or where to *have* persons, if once they depart from the principles of true and universal reason. This is the consequent of the failing of truth among men ; of such importance it is to the well-being of the whole creation, that truth should universally take place ; and that all persons and all actions be under the obligation of the truth.

2. Truth is not only a man's *ornament*, but his *instrument*. It is the great man's glory, and the poor man's stock. A man's truth is his livelihood ; a man's truth is his recommendation ; a man's truth is his letters of credit. Without truth a man shall never meet with employment nor harbour ;
truth

truth is the life of the servant, and the security of the son ; for what is a servant if any one say he is not true ? no man will receive him upon any terms ; and the son shall not be admitted to stay in the house, if he be untrue. If any one be a liar in the first place, in the second he is a thief ; the liar is not to be believed, and the thief is not to be trusted : a man's truth is better to him than his limbs, his arms, his legs, his bodily strength, or than his wit and parts ; these may render a man formidable ; but if a man be resolved concerning truth, that man shall be more loved than feared, and every one will have confidence in him ; and if he chance to fail and miscarry, he shall meet with every man's pity ; but he that is false, every man is glad when he is disabled. Man's cunning, wit, the parts of his mind, and instruments of his body, are tools of mischief, if he have not truth ; therefore magistrates do take away such, that they may not do mischief. It is for the safety of innocents to take away high malefactors ; whereas truth doth sanctify all these things, and makes them all instrumental and serviceable, and they will be for the good of mankind.

3. With which I will conclude : such is the excellency and necessity of truth and sincerity, that it is the thing that God *will have* ; sincerity, true meaning and intention, God doth every where look for, and in no case doth he dispense with it, and will take no other things in competition : now this is our consolation, that that gracious and merciful God, who knows our frame, and remembers that

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we are but dust, and knows that in many things we may fail and be mistaken ; this God doth so far consider us, that he will allow for sins of weakness, and deal tenderly with a man in respect of his infirmities ; he will give abatement for sins of sudden surprisal, also violent assaults, mistakes of judgment, misapprehensions, &c. But for failing in truth, sincerity, uprightness and honest-heartedness, he will never give men allowance ; for if he hath not a man's meaning, he hath nothing ; for what is a man, but what he means ? Therefore be sure that you be sincere and honest-hearted, and that you do truly and honestly mean God and righteousness and truth ; for in these God will be exact and severe, and upon this account he hath declared himself to be the searcher of mens hearts. And herein every man may resolve himself ; every man knows what he means, every man knows the intentions of his mind and meaning God-ward ; tho' he may have scruples as to his other graces, and in other things be uncertain, yet this a man knows, or he knows nothing. Therefore it is a vain and a ridiculous complaint, to complain of insincerity ; fail not therefore in this ; for according to the sincerity of our spirits, God will accept us ; but if truth doth not remain in our hearts, every thing that we sacrifice to God is abominable to him.

And thus I have given you an account of this perfection that is worthy of a christian ; and that in this catalogue is in the first place : in the use of your reason and understanding think it becomes you to abide in the *truth*.

D I S-

DISCOURSE LXIX.

Whatsoever things are honest.

PHIL. iv. 8.

Whatsoever things are honest.

SO the translation ; but I rather keep to the *Greek*, *whatsoever things are venerable* ; which word is put in the margin. Neither do I forsake the word in the text, without very good reasons ; these two I give. 1. Because the word *honest*, doth not import the emphasis of the *Greek*. 2. The very notion of *honest* you have afterwards ; therefore you are not to take it here. Now the *Greek* word imports, whatsoever things are *honourable, grave, venerable, seemly, comely* ; this is the import of the *Greek* word. Things that may raise the esteem of the person, and gain him reverence ; I say such things as may gain repute and value to a man's person.

This is explicable two ways ; you have an account of it, partly from the *things themselves*,—partly from *the persons*. In respect of the *persons*, there are two things requisite. 1. *Grave behaviour*, and 2. *Composure of spirit*. Light carriage and an ungoverned spirit render any man mean, vile and contemptible ; a man lays himself low in the esteem of others, by misbehaviour ; and a man lays himself open

open by falling into passion or running out into immoderate desires.

The best way for me to lead you into an apprehension of the notion, is to lead you to particulars ; and I am abundantly furnished from several texts of scripture. The first is, 2 *Sam.* vi. 20. *Michal* takes upon herself to reprove *David* for light behaviour and vain carriage ; she tells him that he behaved himself as one of the vain fellows : this was upon the occasion of his dancing before the ark ; the truth is, *Michal* was right in her notion, though false in her application ; for had it not been upon such an occasion, *Michal* had justly reprov'd *David*, but *Michal* was as much mistaken, as sometimes old *Eli* was, when he did rashly challenge devout *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* i. 12, 13, 14. *And it came to pass as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah she spake in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard : therefore Eli thought she had been drunken ; and Eli said unto her, how long wilt thou be drunken ? put away thy wine from thee. Whereas she gives him an excellent account, as saith the text, ver. 15. And Hannah answered and said, no, my Lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit, I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. She saith never a word ; only the high priest perceives her lips to move, and he rashly censures. We should not be too hasty to judge and condemn the outward behaviour of devout persons, though they may seem to us something undecent : this is what I suggest from these two places. But*

then

then, you have *David* defective and falling under reproof in another place, *1 Sam. xxi. 13.* For there before *Achish*, when he was in fear (which is an apology for him) he changes his behaviour and imitates fools, and feigns himself mad; but there he forgot himself; he doth that which did misbecome him, only he doth it for his preservation: but then in another place, we have a thorough account of *David*, coming up to the notion in the text, *1 Sam. xviii. 15.* where *Saul* observes that *David* behaved himself wisely, and it strikes a terror to him: *wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.* Here you have the notion. For another instance; and that is a most eminent man, the best man of the old world, *Noah*; the great preacher of righteousness; see how by a fault of his, he renders himself contemptible to his own son *Ham*, *Gen. ix. 21, 22.* *And he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.* Then his son hath a curse entailed upon his posterity for this unnatural behaviour. It were well if they would think upon this, who take too much liberty to themselves, and overthrow their reason by excess in this kind. Let such remember this instance of *Noah*; what a disparagement it was to such a worthy person; and what a mischief followed upon it, that he should be an instrument from God to curse his own posterity. Another instance of this misbehaviour which is contrary to this grave and comely carriage, is of *El's*

sons ; against whom you have such denunciations, *I Sam. iii. 13, 14. For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth ; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not, &c.* And how did they do it ? There is lasciviousness, and there is ravenousness : they came with their forks, and were their own carvers ; insomuch as the text saith, they made men to abhor the offering of the Lord. Observe the character ; *Psal. xv. 4. — in whose eyes a vile person is contemned* : this is the opposite to the text. And then observe also what doth lead into this baseness of spirit and vile carriage ; *Rom. i. 25, 26. who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen ; for this cause God gave them up to vile affections.* Job makes it the aggravation of his misery, *Job xxx. 8. that he was contemned by fools, by vile persons, and by the children of base men.* The Psalmist doth observe it to be a publick mischief, when villainous persons are in place ; *Psal. xii. 8. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.* I find it to be the judgment of God upon Nineveh, *Nahum iii. 6. and I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing-stock.* Here note, that you must understand all such forms of words as these (which in scripture are frequent,) you must understand them in a passive sense ; for God doth only permit and withdraw, and absent himself upon provocation ; and gives over further to deal with men as before he had done or generally doth with all men to bring them

them to conversion ; he doth not bestow his grace upon them, but leaves them to be as vile and as filthy as they will. Further, *Jer. xv. 19.* a promise is made upon the taking the precious from the vile ; *Therefore thus saith the Lord, if thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me ; and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be my mouth, &c.* And, *Isaiah xxxii. 5.* it is prophesied of the kingdom of Christ, that the vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful, that is, noble and generous. *Verse 6, For the vile person will speak villainy, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. The instruments also of the churl are evil ; he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words ; even when the needy speaketh right : but the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.* This is the qualification that belongs to the government of the Messiah : this is a representation of the world, as under the government of the Messiah. And, *Isaiah xxxv. 3.* it is a representation of the highest disorder and greatest confusion, that the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable. See how much of scripture I have, to make out my notion : therefore a thousand pities to lose the emphasis in the text, and take the common notion of *honest*. We have two places more, remarkable to our purpose ; *Lot's argument to the Sodomites, Gen. xix. 7. I pray you brethren, do not so vile a thing : so Lot.* The o-

ther you have, *Judges* xix. 24. The good old man that entertained the *Levite*,——— *But unto this man do not so vile a thing.* If any respect to God, if any love to mankind : this good man thought this might be an argument, *do not so vile a thing.*

Therefore there is also in *things*, that which is base, fordid, vile, unworthy ; that cannot be sanctified by any power or privilege. There is that turpitude and filthiness in things, that no man hath power enough nor authority enough to bear up his head against them ; so that the point is worthy of a christian's study ; the point of good behaviour ; to carry a man's self with such care and caution, that he may not disparage his profession. *1 Cor.* xiii. 5. It is said, *charity doth not behave her self unseemly, &c.* Due respect of God, and due respect of man, doth certainly gain this reverence. *1 Tim.* iii. 2.

——— *Be sober, vigilant, of good behaviour.* *Titus* ii. 2. *Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine : that the aged men be sober, grave, &c.* *1 Thes.* ii. 10. *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.* *2 Thes.* iii. 6. *Now we command you brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly : though a brother in profession, yet if he do misbehave himself, be not seen in his company.* *Verse 7, For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us ; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.* This is to partake of Christ, and to imitate him, and to be in the world as he was in the world ; for he was holy and harmless, and separate from sinners ;

ners ; not that he did not converse with sinners ; for he did converse with them to do them good ; but he was separate from their iniquity. The Psalmist saith, I behaved myself like a weaned child, *Psal. cxxxi. 2. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother*, that was free from frowardness and malice, and all offensiveness. *In malice be children*, saith the apostle.

By this I can give you an account of St. Paul's direction to *Timothy*, 1 *Tim. iv. 12. Let no man despise thy youth*. So *Titus ii. 15. Let no man despise thee*. This is strange, what means the apostle here in this charge that he gives to *Timothy* ? How can he help it ? Had it not been properer to have given this direction to others ? You have an account : for though honour be not in him that receives it, but in him that gives the honour, (for he is judge of it, and he confers the honour,) yet the apostle doth explicate himself in both places ; in the one, *be thou an example in conversation* ; in the other, *rebuke with all authority*. Let a man so behave himself, that his conversation be unblameable and free from challenge ; let him reprove iniquity, exorbitance and sin ; and then he will be above any body's contempt or despising ; a man must first have a good conversation, or else he is not fit to blame others ; he hath need to be ashamed and blush, who takes upon him to reprove that fault in another, whereof he himself is guilty : it is true in this case, that no man is hurt but by himself : men make themselves vile and contemptible by vanity and emptiness of speech, and rudeness of carriage ; and there is no

help for it ; for if a man misbehave himself, he will be despised ; and though men say nothing, he will sink in their esteem, and will be slighted. Gallantly doth the poet tell us, *remember to reverence thyself* : there is much of God in every man : if a man do justly value himself, he will not do that which is base, though it be in the dark, though no body sees him. A man ought not to abuse himself, or make himself mean or low, since he bears the image of God : but if a man will neither regard God within, nor the workmanship of God without, neither have reverence for himself ; he will have cause to find that he hath been wanting to himself, when he falls under other mens and his own contempt. Also remember that brethren in iniquity make themselves equal ; for though they stand upon terms of great inequality, though the one be high, the other low, the one rich, the other poor ; yet if they be companions in sin, and brethren in iniquity, they have evened themselves, and are become equal, and are vile in one another's eyes and esteem ; sin and wickedness doth equalize those that are therein engaged. This for certain ; there is no man that in the sense of his mind, or in his judgment, hath a value or esteem for any one that is naught : no man reverences a wicked man ; no not a wicked man himself ; he is low and base in esteem, and there is no remedy.

But I proceed : some men there are of so comely and grave behaviour, that they awe men by their presence. When the ungoverned multitude are in a confusion, if there appear a man of reverence,
virtue

virtue and esteem ; no sooner is he seen, but the rude multitude is over-awed, and a rout is brought into order, if such a man do but appear.

*Tum pietate gravem, ac meritis, si forte virum quem
Conspexere, silent.*——

This *Salomon* hath observed, *Prov. xx. 8.* *A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil with his eyes.* And this is the advantage of this worthy and comely behaviour. On the other side, by lightness of carriage, and perfunctoriness, men pull upon themselves contempt. Now there is a middle sort of men between these ; who are better thought of unseen and at a distance, than they are found to deserve when they make an approach ; they lose by being present ; there is a great report of them at a distance, which procures them credit ; but when they come into presence, they thereby abate of their good report. It is ordinary for men to lose themselves, by presence. The wise man gives advice, *to keep from company* ; be not too ordinary with them, but upon just occasion, and when thou hast something considerable, well-fitted and prepared : but above all, if company misbehave themselves, it is the duty of a christian to give some testimony or other against what is unworthy, sinful, light and profane ; if ever we fall into such company, give some testimony against what is profane and ungodly some way or other ; either by verbal reproof, if circumstances do warrant ; or else by withdrawing out of profane and irreligious company ; and always (this at least is necessary,) by withholding consent, not seeming to
take

take any pleasure, and not yielding any compliance. For the first of these, *verbal reproof*, it admits many cases of exception: perhaps the person is dangerous and mischievous, and then a man is to be dispensed withal; both a good man and a wise man will then forbear verbal reproof; *cast not your pearls before swine, lest they turn and rend you*; but every man may either withdraw out of company, or at least not give any consent, nor take any pleasure, nor seem to comply; otherwise we may in some degree make ourselves guilty of other mens sins and mis-carriages; whereas, alas! the best of us have more than enough of our own.

If men would maintain their credit and esteem, they should carefully consider what they do, especially what they speak in company; if a man do once engage in discourse, men will see his measure; he that is silent, cautious and wary, hath a mighty advantage of him that speaks: great discoveries are made by what men say; for hereby they turn their in-side out-ward; if a man speak little, and what he saith be of great worth and weighty moment, this man will be thought to have all mystery in him; but if a man speak much and to little purpose, he is soon seen through, and known to be shallow, and no man can value him. It is in this case as in the case that some complain of, want of love: some are very sensible that they are slighted, and not regarded as they should be; they complain they are not loved, and no wonder, if they have nothing in them that is lovely; for men that are perfunctory, slight and vain, they must be undervalued; where men
have

have nothing lovely in them, they cannot be loved; for can you have an act upon an unfuitable object? Neither God nor reason requires love to a person that is not lovely: a man may pity and compassionate, but not love. We are wont to say of God himself, that he may have a love of compassion and commiseration towards sinners, but he cannot have a love of complacency and delight, till sinners be reconciled and restored to the image of God: in this case therefore, they that are sensible that they are disrespected, slighted, neglected and not regarded; if they would have credit and esteem; if they would be minded; let them think of better behaviour; and if they would be loved, let them think of lovely things.

But all this is to give you account of the notion, *whatsoever things are venerable.* There is a disparity in things. St. Paul hath this notion, *Rom. ii. 18. And approvest the things that are more excellent.* So *Phil. i. 10. that we may approve things that are excellent.* There are things that are despicable, and there are things that are honourable: and as it is in things, so it is in persons; there is that which is below the state, the place, the dignity, of such or such a person; and if he doth it, it is unbecoming him, and he will be neglected and under-valued, and all the world cannot help him; he that cannot justly estimate and value himself, that doth not know what is fit for one in his circumstances, cannot maintain esteem. We should put on the *man's* garment, and put off *children's* cloaths; nothing more absurd than an old child, nothing more lovely than

than sobriety in younger years. We are not, as the *Platonists* say, to give up ourselves to be led by the childish part that is in ourselves; but we should maintain that which God hath appointed to be his deputy, that which is to govern: always follow the resolution of sober and impartial reason. Not that any one is too good for the necessary occasions of life; no, it was a gallant man that said, *nothing that becomes a man, or is worthy of a man, but I can do if called to it.* Though a man hath authority and command over others, though all honour, though all wealth, &c. yet those things that are the most unhandsome and the most inferior performances of the life of man, every man must do for himself; as witness all annoyances from diseases, all sort of evacuation, all discharges of nature: these are all to be performed by every man for himself; therefore no reason for haughtiness and presumption; no man doth a meaner office for any man in the world, than he doth for himself: therefore we are not to be too coy, and think ourselves too good for the necessary occasions of life; which considered, would abate pride and conceit, and make us not to despise others for their meanness of employment and lowness of condition.

But in these matters there is no universal rule to be given, but there will be a variation according to the rules of prudence, with respect to the variation of circumstances, change of times, and difference of places.

And having thus declared to you the notion, in several instances of several cases and circumstances,

I am now to proceed to special directions ; for the life of all notion, is to bring it down to particulars, that it may be a rule of practice : therefore I add several rules, with which if you comply, you may be sure you shall have regard, and be in esteem.

1st, Therefore I do suggest upon this account, that men lay aside all *affectation* or *imitation* ; no two things are more ridiculous, nauseous and fulsome, than affectation and imitation. Every man's own mode is natural, and he will do best in that way, and it will best become him ; it will better serve his turn, and be more acceptable to others ; every man is pleased to see a man do that which is natural to himself : but affectation and imitation do discover that the mind is empty and the person conceited ; *the mind is empty*, i. e. he hath not within himself whereby to direct and govern himself ; and next, *he is conceited*. And what doth more disparage a man ? Such a man will be importune and self-assuming, and imposing upon others ; than which nothing is more rejected with disdain. In a way of affectation and imitation, a man never does well.

2^{dly}, Let there be no *moroseness*, *rigidness*, *censoriousness*, *severity*, *cynicalness*, or *stateliness* in a man's carriage ; but all *friendliness*, *familiarity*, *kindness*, *harmony* and *compliance* in converse. My reason is, because *stateliness* is an eye-sore to every body ; he is looked upon as burdensome, who is of this temper : for take it for granted, that none but those that are base, none but those that will make themselves slaves for ends, will bear another's either scorn or neglect ;

neglect ; and these do it but externally neither. Let not men take upon them to *censure* and *be severe* ; no man in goodness doth so far transcend another, as to take so much upon him to weigh another in his balance. Neither let men be *churlish* : if he that is by repute and esteem acknowledged to be the best man in the company, be civil and courteous and condescending ; it will gratify and oblige, and in respect of an inferior, is next to giving a gift : and he that is inferior, thinks himself regarded, if he be fairly treated, kindly used, and dismissed upon fair terms ; but on the other side, *churlishness* is received with indignity, and procures neither esteem nor good affection. How infamous is the very name of *Nabal*, (1 Sam. xv. from 3d to 10th verse) because he used *David* so disingenuously and unhandsomely : he was the greatest provocation to good *David*'s spirit, that ever he met with : he that could bear *Shimei*'s cursing, could not bear *Nabal*'s churlishness.

3dly, Let every one *know his own place, state and circumstances* ; his own measure, degree and proportion ; and accommodate himself suitably thereto : let him be sure not to exceed, nor to fall too much below ; yet rather on the yielding hand, than on the usurping ; rather a little below a man's place, than at all above it : it is safe for a man not to value himself by his own private sense only, but by the opinion of discerning persons ; for where a man is concerned he is apt to be partial ; therefore see partly with other mens eyes. But then there are known cases ; in these let no men fail : let men remember

remember what they are, where they are, before whom, in whose presence : it lies upon men to consider their ages, places, relations, function, education ; and to proportion themselves accordingly. The majesty of a parent, of a superior or of a governour ; these in some measure are a representative of God to us : there is a speciality of divine presence, where there is given the spirit of rule and government : it is said of *Galeb*, he was a man of *another spirit*. Upon these terms of inequality, as to parents, masters and governours, there is more to be tendered than received : but then among equals, and in other communications between men, there ought to be friendliness and affability ; for in these cases there is a proportionable independency of one upon another : therefore if you look for respect, give respect ; for in an equality of converse, no man can expect more than he is willing to give.

4thly, I propose in the next place, that men would not *over-abound in speech*. Be not over-talkative : two things tend mightily to mens reproach ; *much talking*, and *much talking of a man's self*. For the former, *overmuch talking*, the wise man doth very much admonish us in this particular, *Pro. x. 19. In multitude of words there wanteth not sin ; but he that refraineth his lips is wise.* And *Pro. xvii. 28. even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise, and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.* He spends too fast, that talks too much ; he spends faster than he gets : for the notions of the mind do not bubble so thick. No man is greatly valuable, where he hath not considered ; and no

man

man hath leisure to consider all things ; men therefore where they have not considered, should rather be patient to hear, than forward to speak ; now, if a man vent all that is in his mind at once, what will he have to say after ? It is a saying of a very wise man ; men have often found cause to be sorry, that they have talked too much, but very seldom have repented that they have held their peace : however this is only the notion. Let not a man engage further than his stock ; let him not be forward to vent raw and unconcocted suppositions ; but let him have well-digested thoughts, that he may thereby render himself valuable. But then for the other, *to talk much in company, of a man's self* ; this is hardly capable of an apology. Let a man free himself of this, of all things ; for it is very offensive and fulsome, and doth declare a man to be very shallow and empty, and not to have considered. He doth hereby arrogate and assume to himself, and intimates others poverty ; he makes himself all ; by it a man's discretion and modesty are called in question ; the direction of the wise man is, *let another man's lips praise thee, and not thy own*. St. Paul was put upon it to speak of himself more than he chose to do ; and when he speaks of things concerning himself, he puts in ever and anon, *I speak like a fool*. 2 Cor. xi. 21. *Howbeit wherein-soever any is bold, I speak foolishly, I am bold also*. Verse 23. *Are they ministers of Christ ? I speak as a fool, I am more*. Intimating that unless there be very great cause, whosoever talks much of himself in company, he talks like a fool.

5thly, And

5thly, And lastly, above all things stand at a distance from, and avoid all immorality and turpitude : this God requires of us, and this is necessary to the welfare of our souls, and fundamental to our credit. For no man hath credit enough to controul the rule of right ; no person hath credit enough to countenance, cover, or palliate that which is foul ; no one hath credit enough to patronize that which is filthy or dishonest ; be sure therefore always to be found in the truth, and be sure always to do that which is right : whosoever doth commit sin, he doth sink below his own nature : for there is no natural action that is so mean as every sinful action is. Whosoever therefore sins, doth that which is unworthy of himself and below himself ; for sin is below any man ; as there is no true self-love in wickedness, so there is no true self-reverence if a man do wickedly ; and it is observed that he that doth not reverence himself, hath no reverence for God ; and he that will not blush upon the sense of a foul action out of respect to himself, he will never blush out of respect to God. Sin is every man's dishonour.

These are the things that are requisite to such a temper, as may command reverence and esteem. And now because carriage and behaviour is relative to company and converse, I will give you some rules and directions for the government of a man's self in company ; that so you may take the full latitude of this subject.

1. Be sparing and tender in making *comparisons* either of persons or of things ; for comparisons are
always

always accompanied with odium, offence and displeasure.

2. *Press no argument beyond rational proposal* ; and still allow of leisurely consideration : the reason of the mind is thy best instrument, and the only one thou hast wherewith to do that which we call man's work ; what cannot be done by it, thou canst not do at all. Thou hast done thy duty, when thou hast put forth thy rational proposal ; if you move further, it is to your loss ; you move, but you do not move forward ; what comes after the reason thou hast given, will be certainly weaker ; a man had better lose his cause, then venture his credit further : and give time for leisurely consideration : do not think that he that you go about to inform, ought to leave his opinion and be of thy judgment all of a sudden ; for he will be too light and vain, if he do so. But if he that heareth thee, will take time to consider, and to confer with others ; thou oughtest to be pleased with it ; he doth well, and thou art to satisfy thy self with having spoken reason and held forth truth.

3. Be sure thou *keep out of all heat and passion*. When any thing is to be done or spoke, watch carefully over thy passions and affections. For if thou art in a passion, thou art less than thy self. I will allow a man to be warm in his argument, and to multiply his reasons ; but never let him provoke himself to passion, nor provoke others. This is to quarrel, not to reason. Zeal for a man's cause is allowable ; but provocation of a man's self or others, tends to mischief. A man hath an idol with-

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in himself, worships some fancy of his own mind, when he over-eagerly and passionately promotes his own sense ; and it is contrary to the apostle's direction, *James i. 19. Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, &c.* *James iii. 17. The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, &c.* Therefore while there is any thing to say, fall not into passion, neither run into such a heat as may cloud and disturb a man's reason.

4. *Let order be exactly kept in speaking.* Now order requires these two things : 1. Speak not in confusion, but one after another ; one not to speak, till the other hath done. This is the express rule of the apostle, *1 Cor. xiv. 30. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace ; for ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted ; and the spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets,* that is, the spirit in every particular person is subject to that person ; and one man must not be concluded by another man's sense. 2. Hear first the expression of years, and the discovery of wisdom, and search and attend the effects of education. Let the ancient speak, for they have considered wisdom. Give advantage to age, and allowance to experience and education : it is not imaginable (unless it is supposed that God will work a miracle) that one that hath been a drudge in the world, and alienated himself from mental improvement, should be able to contend with him that hath consulted with authority, and found out the wisdom of the world. In converse therefore, let days and years and education speak first : thus *Elihu* did,

who was a gallant person, no doubt, *Job xxxii. 7.* He would not speak till his superiors had spoke what they would; *I said, days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom, &c.* and when they had nothing further to say, then he spoke: tho' there was an impulse upon his own spirit, yet he confined himself till there was seasonable opportunity.

5. *Give every one in company leave to speak.* In converse let every one be heard; otherwise it is disrespect, and you do worse than to turn him out of your company.

6. In discourse be careful to *give liberty of answering*; do not only speak, but hear what will be returned; if a man have proposed, let him stay for a reply. *Solomon* hath told us, *Prov. xviii. 17.* *That he that is first in his own cause, seemeth just; but he that cometh after, searcheth him out.* Let reasons be conferred together in case of difference of opinions, for if you do not give fair leave and opportunity of answering, then haply the argument that you discoursed of, may pass without a just interpretation, and the credit of the meeting be marred.

7. *Despise no body's sense*; yea though his reason be not satisfactory; and tho' you think you can see through it, and answer it, yet despise no body's sense, for truly the sense of a good mind, especially if it hath been considered, is valuable; the sense of a good mind, because he hath experience; the sense of a considerative mind, because he hath taken pains.

8. *Be content, finally, that others should differ from you in opinion.* It is always suspicious, when a man

is over-zealous that every body should be of his mind : there is no reason at all why any man should be aggrieved because others will not submit to his sayings, nor agree with his apprehensions, but take the liberty of enjoying their own thoughts ; for they do but use their common right. It is not necessary all should be alike minded, especially in matters of doubt, difficulty and uncertainty ; after debate therefore, let those go away without prejudice, that are unsatisfied in your opinion.

These are the things, which being observed, will greatly recommend mens persons, adorn mens spirits, and render christians very commendable ; but if neglected, there will be misbehaviour, grievance, and offence ; and these three evils will follow converse : 1. It will not be to edification ; 2. It will not be at all to encrease good affection, but to the prejudice of it ; and, 3. It will tend to the great disadvantage of those that meet, and to the abatement of the esteem of each other in one another's eyes ; for you will know one another's impotency so much by converse, that your worth will be abated ; and they who met in expectation of good will, part unsatisfied and discouraged.

These things I have offered to you towards the obtaining and promoting this gallant temper and noble disposition, that the apostle recommendeth to us upon the account of christianity under this head, *whatsoever things are venerable.*

DISCOURSE LXX.

Whatsoever things are honest.

PHIL. iv. 8.

Whatsoever things are venerable, grave, comely, seemly, honourable.

I Have discoursed upon this second head of morality : and shall conclude at this time with some inferences.

And the *first* shall be that of the apostle, *Rom. xiii. 13. Let us walk honestly* ; so it is translated, but the Greek word is, *decently, comely, gracefully, becomingly, modestly*. Now these excellencies will be ornaments of grace to our heads, &c. as Solomon saith, *Prov. i. 9. and i Pet. iii. 4. The ornament of a meek and a quiet spirit, &c.* These may gain to persons esteem, and to their professions credit ; as you have the phrase, *i Pet. ii. 12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles*. It's more than simply honest ; it is a beautiful conversation (*that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation ;*) so that men beholding it, may see cause to magnify the grace of God. Let us remember what we profess, and carry in mind what christianity doth import ; it's a high matter of prudence, to know what is fit and comely

ly and convenient, &c. And much more of understanding and reason, and skill, and diligence, and preparation, goes to make up good carriage, than men imagine. It lies upon men to consider their ages, states, places, &c. and do accordingly. For, as Solomon tells us, *Eccles. x. 1. as dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour ; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.* One may render himself the more despicable and contemptible for his honour, if he do not know how in the carriage of himself to maintain it : therefore great care is to be taken, that a man forfeit not his *discretion*, by rashness and unadvisedness. But then a man forfeits *himself*, by having to do with unrighteousness. By an act of imprudence a man forfeits his *discretion*, but by an act of unrighteousness a man makes *himself a sinner*, violates the peace of his conscience, and loses his integrity. We must always have a care that we fail not here ; for no man hath credit enough to patronize, countenance, or palliate that which is dishonest, base, vile and filthy. This for certain ; truth and right are greater than all the power in the world ; for right is the settled thing of the world, settled and immutable, and it is a law in things, and gives laws to persons. Therefore be sure that you be found in the *truth*, and be sure that you do that which is *right* : truth and right, tho' they may be over-born for a while, yet they will prevail in the issue. It is well observed of some of the *moralists*, that whosoever doth sin, doth act below his nature ; if a man sins and transgresses the rule of right, no-

thing is more vile to himself than himself ; and he can charge more upon himself than upon any other, because every man is privy to his own iniquity, to all the thoughts of his own mind, to all his own irregularities and misbehaviours ; *reverence thyself* : (a great rule of *old* ;) but no man can have a due reverence for himself, that doth consent to sin and iniquity ; (for as there is no true self-love in wickedness, so no true self-reverence ;) and if a man hath no reverence for himself, and for his own nature, so as not to abuse it and disorder it ; he hath no reverence for God, there is nothing in the world hath more of God in it, than man hath ; for in respect of his intelligence and understanding, he represents the first intelligent agent, the all-wise God ; in respect of the privilege of liberty and freedom, he represents God again ; and in respect of goodness of disposition, which certainly doth run through the nature of man (till man hath abused himself) he doth represent that candour and benignity that doth abound in God : therefore let a man reverence himself ; and reverence to a man's self is this, that though a man be alone, though no eye sees him, though he can carry it out or defend it by power, yet he will not do what is base and dishonourable, because he is made in the image of God, and proves both the existence of the Deity, and declares his perfections : and he that will not blush because of his own vileness out of the sense of his own nature, because he hath done that which is contrary to the light of reason and conscience : he will not blush out of respect and reverence to God : it is the person's

son's dishonour, be he who he will, that doth that which is fordid, base and unworthy. That is the first thing upon the consideration of this charge, *whatsoever things are venerable.*

But *secondly* ; it will be found not so easy, as persons neglective of themselves imagine, to be in company ; especially to speak in company ; for if a man did but consider the many requisites to fitting behaviour, he would not think it so easy for him to be in company ; and if men were but aware what is fitting to speak in company, they would hold their peace till they had considered and prepared something to offer ; especially if they did consider what stress our Saviour hath laid upon speaking ; *out of thy mouth thou shalt be justified, and out of thy mouth thou shalt be condemned.* If we did consider our Saviour's notion in it, we should not be so forward. A man is judged what is in him, by what his mouth brings forth : a man is not known what he is, till he speaks ; as soon as he has spoken, he is known ; and they that are wise and intelligent, see his inside. Pray consider how many reasons and arguments St. James useth, to declare the difficulty of governing a man's tongue ; James iii. from the 2d verse to the 11th ; *For in many things we offend all : if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits into the horses mouths, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth : even so the tongue is a little*

little member and boasteth great things : behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth ; and the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity : and so is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind : but the tongue can no man tame, it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, &c. It is such an unruly evil and so exorbitant, that it sometimes blasphemeth God ; sometimes it violates all rules of charity ; and he makes account that a man dischargeth himself eminently well, if he govern his tongue. And pray consider what provision there is in nature, for the government of a man's tongue. There is first, the reason of the mind : and that is the best governor in the whole creation ; for the tongue should always follow the reason of the mind, and only utter what the reason of the mind doth suggest. A man talks like a fool, when he talks without the reason of his mind. That is the first. And then let me add next : that the wisest men amongst us do very well know that the notions of the mind do not bubble so fast ; so that he that will be always talking, doth talk faster than he thinks ; therefore he must of necessity talk foolishly. For a man is not fit to say any thing, till he hath the notion in his mind, and considered it and concocted it : if a man would lay aside his thoughts, and return to them sometime after, he would better judge of them. Therefore a man must not be too hasty to engage himself in speaking. It becomes a man in company

to speak with great caution, and upon consideration ; a reason is a thing of great weight and mighty moment ; for it commands either an answer or subjection. Now when a man pretends to speak reason, he speaks that which every man must either answer or obey ; and it is the same thing to comply with God, and to do that which reason doth require. If a man therefore pretends to speak reason, he doth engage every man either to answer and shew him where he is mistaken, or else to yield obedience. Now if a man pretend to give reason for an argument, when it is no reason, but rather nonsense ; it is as unnatural, as for a parent to give a child a stone instead of bread. In this case I may say as is said by *Joab* to *Abimaaz*, 2 Sam. xviii. 22. He would needs be running, and *Joab* said, *wherefore wilt thou run, my son ; seeing thou hast no tidings ready.* So we may say universally : one who values his credit, should not engage in an argument whereof he hath not well considered. It is a madness for any man to engage himself in any argument of discourse, wherein he is not prepared, whereof he hath not considered. And also a great deal of reverence is due to company ; especially where there is either a parent, a master, or a governour. A man should be possesst of the worth of others, and the sacredness of community. For society of men is honourable, though there be not one person in the company that is so. In the presence of a man's betters and superiors, or in the presence of a society of men ; if men be not very intent and watchful over themselves, it is easy for them to lose themselves, by inconsiderateness

considerateness or over-hastiness. Many that have been in high estimation, have lost themselves when they come into presence. St. Paul takes notice that he himself laboured under this; 2 Cor. x. 10. *For his letters (say they) are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.* What doth the apostle resolve on, to be done in this case? *verse 11. Let such a one think this, that such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also indeed when we are present.* He that cannot, had better keep out of company, or be careful how he comes in company, if he be not able to maintain the credit he had before he came into company, or before he did engage. And these are the two inferences that I make. 1. That every man in his conversation observe decency and order, and do things that are grave, comely, seemly, and suitable to his state and condition; and when he comes into company, then especially that he consider that he act like himself. 2. If he doth engage in speech; that he do not venture upon rude, raw, undigested, unconcocted words and phrases; but that he consider and have always the reason of his mind for the guide of his tongue.

In the next place, I shall tell you what are the *ingredients* that are requisite and necessary to the qualification of that man, that would render himself valuable and considerable, and that pretends to this accomplishment: and they are these four. 1st. A *constancy immoveable*; so as always to be found the same. 2^{dly}. A *patience invincible*; so as never to be disturbed from any thing without. 3^{dly}. Such an *evenness*

evenness and compofure of mind and fpirit, as not to be up and down, high and low. 4thly. Such a *gesture and carriage*, as may no ways argue a fpirit either over eager or forward. If you would approve yourselves worthy, charge yourselves in thefe four particulars : and whofoever can reach them, he will be able to fatisfy God and his own confcience in this charge that the apoftle lays upon us. An account of thefe four.

1st, A *constancy immoveable* ; fo as always to be found the fame. This is a great charge ; but this we fhould aim at. A great many men differ one day and another, more from themfelves, than any two men do. Many men do fo little govern themfelves, that thofe that are acquainted with them do not know how reason may take with them, if they be out of temper. A man fhould take care to be always the fame. I know there is fome difficulty in this, becaufe of our bodies : every man is follicited by his body, and our bodies are over-ruled by the very temper and variation of the air ; and no man can over-come his bodily temper, but by great wifdom ; yet this is attainable ; for if reason were (as it ought to be,) the fettled law of life and action ; it would be then eafy. For reason is regular and uniform, and always felf-confiftent : 'tis humour that is various and unconfant, and that drives a man off from himfelf.

2dly, A *patience invincible* ; fo as never to be difturbed by things that are without us. And truly a man doth not do himfelf right, if he do not live from within, but from without ; for what are the things

things without a man, in comparison with his self-enjoyment, which lies in the serenity of his mind, the calmness and good composure of his spirit, the peace and quiet of his conscience? And this good composure of our spirit, is attainable, if we be resolved that neither the partial or incompetent opinion and sense of bystanders, and incapable judges, nor the changes of things which are mutable and uncertain, nor the various accidents of this uncertain world; that none of these shall drive a man from himself. And indeed they ought not: for a man is a little world to himself, and may enjoy himself within, if things there be right and streight; however disturbed things are without.

3dly, Such a *composure of mind and evenness of temper*, as not to be sometimes up, sometimes down, sometimes high, sometimes low. And indeed this is to be one day a man, another day to be a nobody; one while more than himself, another, while less than any body. Who would be so unlike himself? certainly every man in his reason, will conclude that this is unbecoming and unsatisfactory, to be sometimes triumphant and full of confidence, and otherwhiles to be a drowned mouse, (as we say,) unactive and diffident, sunk and deficient.

4thly, Such a *gesture and carriage*, as may no ways argue a spirit either over-eager, or forward. And truly if a man considers that there is a bitter-sweet in all the things of this world, a shortness and an unsatisfactoriness in all our enjoyments, he will then find that it is fit he should maintain an indifferency toward them, and an independency upon them

them. There is that in them, which doth abate the content and satisfaction that any man can have in them. For they are limited and restrained good things ; and therefore it is mainly requisite for a man of reason and religion, to retain an indifferency towards them and an independency upon them.

— To express this, I will repeat a character of one in a former age ; one of whom it was said, that he had “ a *constancy* immoveable : a *moderation* so well behaving itself, an *evenness* so marvellous, that he spoke not one word higher than another, nor us'd any gesture which might argue a *spirit over-eager, or forward.*”

These four things I propose, as things whereof this gallant temper doth consist, as principles of it, or as ingredients with it.

Now because things are doubly known, partly by themselves, and partly by their contraries ; as I have shown you what this perfection is, so I will shew you what are its contraries. We fall short these three ways.

1st, By *dethroning or disturbing reason* ; by immoderacy and excess : and this is sordid and base, for a man to gratify sense, or comply with another's fancy, so as to disturb his reason ; for reason is the top-excellency of God's creation, the highest communication of God to man in the moment of his creation : a man should upon no terms be beaten off from the power of using his reason ; he may misbehave himself he knows not how much, or be carried he knows not where, if he be beaten off from the use of sober reason.

2^{dly}, By

2dly, By *light carriage and behaviour*, unseemingly and unbecomingly in the judgments of sober persons : and here every body must consider his place, his age, his authority, his circumstances ; and it is his prudence to observe all his affairs, and to suit and accommodate himself thereto.

3dly, By *neglect in governing our spirits*. And really to neglect this, is to be wanting in the great charge of a man's life. Solomon saith, he that can do this, that can govern his spirit well, doth a greater act of skill and power, than he that *conquereth a city*. Now there is a failure four ways in the governing a man's spirit. 1. When the mind is *vainly fraught and possessed*. 2. When a man is *intoxicated with pride and conceit*. 3. When a man *gives himself up to self-will*. 4. When a man *gives himself up to passion*. In these four ways a man misbehaves himself. Now to give you an account of these. 1. When a man is *vainly fraught and possessed*. And certainly this man must be one of very great misbehaviour ; if he speaks, he speaks nothing but folly, madness and vanity ; for he that is inwardly vain and frothy, hath no inward stock at all ; therefore if he speaks, it is of things that are so sorry and unworthy, that no wise man will abuse his ears to hear them, nor throw away his time in listening after things so drossy ; nothing serious, nothing of solid judgment, comes from him. A man of a vain, empty, frothy spirit ; his language, speech and behaviour in converse, must be the behaviour of a fool. 2. When a man is *intoxicated with pride and conceit*. Pride, self-love, vain-glory, that which we call a
fancy

fancy concerning a man's self that he is some great body ; it is a malady that doth pierce the soul ; and it doth so, gently and insensibly ; but it makes a very shrewd wound : self-love, blind self-love, it is the most unhappy error ; but it is the most self-pleasing ; therefore this man is most desperately ill upon a spiritual account, because he is pleased with his disease ; and yet this disease takes much among men. It is an excellent saying of *Cyprian* ; “ There
“ is many a man that could not be tempted to excess in meat and drink and pleasure, who yet
“ have been seduced and led away by flatterers and
“ seeming admirers of them, into conceit of themselves.” And, as another saith ; “ Thou conceit
“ and presumption, fond imagination and vain-glory, thou alone of all things dost inflame the
“ minds and souls of men into a burning disease ;” And they that are afflicted with this mental disease, do never complain of it, nor seek after a remedy. These persons are out of all ways of cure, they are in a dangerous condition, and yet they do not know their disease ; and therefore are less concerned for means of cure. In this malady commonly men love those best, who do them most harm ; and they reject their friends, and listen to those that are their real enemies, (to wit) the admirers of them, and the flatterers of them : therefore this evil is a sly evil, most dangerous and most desperate, because the man is out of the way of any cure. We please ourselves (saith one of the fathers) and take a great deal of content, to hear ourselves flattered and applauded. 3. When we give ourselves up to self-will.

And

And this is the greatest exorbitance in the world ; there is nothing less becoming a christian, there is nothing that denotes more contradiction to God, and variation from him, than to set up self-will for a law. Nothing is more incongruous than for any finite or fallible creature to give an account by his will ; for we are finite and of limited apprehensions ; we are fallible and subject to be mistaken ; and we are under a law ; therefore to give will for a reason, nothing is more exorbitant, nothing more unbecoming us limited, finite, and fallible creatures. 'Tis clean contrary to the spirit of our Saviour ; for it is said that he put himself into the form of a servant ; and what is that ? A servant gives himself up to the will of his master, and to do his work ; in so much that it is said of a servant in the law, that he can neither will nor nill, but must do what he is appointed : so our Saviour, when he prays, he saith, *not my will, but thy will be done ; and I come to do thy will, O God.* And we are required upon our christianity to cease from ourselves ; and it becomes us as creatures to cease from our own wills : *acknowledge God in all thy ways, and lean not to thy own understanding.* 4. When we *give ourselves up to passion.* There is very little difference between a mad man and a man in passion while he is in the fit ; passion is a short madness ; for it doth over-heat the blood, and if it be frequent, it breaks out into madness. A man if he break out into passion, muffles his understanding, and puts his soul in the dark. It is a storm in a man's breast, it makes his eyes to sparkle with fire, his teeth to gnash in his head, his tongue
to

to stutter, and his face to look pale. The comedian hath it excellently ; “ forbear me a little, for “ I am angry, so that I dare not trust myself, I am “ not at home, I am not my own.” This for passion.

And so I have given an account of this charge of the apostle, *whatsoever things are venerable* ; both affirmatively, what things are friends to it ; and also, on the contrary, what things are enemies to it, and will not consist with it.

And now in the close of all, to recommend all that I have said, I shall shew you several eminent advantages which attend upon this which I call gravity, sobriety, staidness, seriousness of mind, seemly carriage, good behaviour. For under these I comprehend this endowment.

1. These *prepare the mind for learning and knowledge*. For nothing is to be fastned upon a light and airy temper. Those that have their wits a wool-gathering, (as we say in our *English* proverb,) they are so much every where, that they are to be found no where. Without these endowments, a man will not be capable of culture, instruction, and education.

2. These are the *true companions of wisdom*. Wisdom walks with such attendants, in such an equipage. These are the proper retinues of wisdom ; none truly wise, but those who are competently at least furnished with these. There is that which we call *wit*, and that which we call *wisdom* ; wit in compare with wisdom, is a fit, a flash, a vapour of no continuance ; but wisdom is conjoined with

prudence and discretion. Now wit hath this advantage, (for I would not disparage wit,) it may put by an abuse, and prevent a mischief; for if any one be abused, if he have but wit to put it off, he may prevent a further evil. Wit hath prevented many a duel; for men to challenge one another and make a duel, it is an argument of dulness; for if they had but wit, they would come off in a more noble way and save the duel. Thus we see wit hath the advantage of putting by an evil; but wisdom serves for all the purposes of life.

3. These *dispose the mind to all virtue.* In this rich and fruitful soil (for such is a mind thus qualified and governed;) in this rich and fruitful soil, I say, all the seeds of universal goodness being sown, will grow apace; where the staid thoughts of wisdom are, these seeds will grow; for goodness is really knowledge digested, concocted, entertained, submitted to, consented to.

4. These *procure from others, veneration and esteem.* I remember the poet accurately expresseth it; "If there be a tumult among the people, and a man of parts and of wisdom appear in sight, they are all dispersed;" a man of reverence and esteem will command a multitude; and it hath been shewed you that men render themselves despicable, are slighted and neglected, when they discover their own weakness, emptiness, vanity and folly.

5. These *uphold mens superiority, dignity and authority*; whereas frothiness and vanity of spirit, rudeness and lightness of behaviour, level persons of greatest difference and distinction.

6. These

6. These do raise mens thoughts to the consideration of things that are excellent : light and feather-headed people, find themselves suitable employment to their light and airy minds ; like *Domitian* the emperor of *Rome*, who was wont to retire himself from all wise company and the employment of the empire, to a sun-shiny wall to catch flies ; and as the poet hath it, these persons follow after crows flying this way and that way, they have not left their childrens sports. Those that are of light and perfunctory spirits, they are never true esteemers of worth. But the men of this sober spirit, grave carriage and behaviour, they who are endowed with this rare accomplishment, they are always employed about business of weight and moment, worthy the thoughts of men of brain and understanding.

7. These represent the divine majesty and presence. Acquaintance with these, gravity, seriousness, sobriety, &c. doth discharge us of that levity, rudeness and irreverence, that else is apt to follow us and accompany us in our approaches and addresses unto God : for he that doth use to play the fool, will be a fool in every company ; and they who by disposition and temper and by long custom and practice have brought themselves into a habit of vanity and lightness, they are in a great averſation and indisposition to gravity and seriousness at all times and in every presence ; so that even the sense of the divine majesty of heaven and earth, and the consideration of his greatness, awes them not, neither can prevail with them to discharge their minds of their habitual rudeness and levity. This is therefore the last ;

acquaintance with these perfections, does discharge the mind of its levity and vanity, which otherwise will accompany men in their approaches and addresses to God; for every man is carried out according to his disposition, frame and temper.

These are the considerations whereby this moral perfection of staidness of mind, soberness of spirit, gravity, seemliness of behaviour, good carriage, self-government, stands recommended unto you. And thus I have given you an account of this excellency. So you see what reason I had for my departing from the translation, and rendering the words as I have done, *whatsoever things are venerable.*

The end of the third Volume.

